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RĀGA SUDHA

UNDERSTANDING CARNĀTIC MUSIC

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B R C IYENGAR

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DEDICATED TO MY DEAR CHILDREN
SHEELA VIJAYARAGHAVAN AND KRISHNA
WHO ENCOURAGED ME TO COMPLETE THIS BOOK



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Preface

Since the publication of my first book, I have done considerable work. In view of the vast information I have gathered, I felt the need to make matters updated. In view of these facts, I have decided to bring out a fresh book entitled, *Rāga Sudha (Understanding Carnātic Music)*. Also several readers have sent their useful comments and valuable suggestions, which I have incorporated here. I have not sought to cover the whole field of Carnātic music. My object has been to provide a general survey of the main field of Carnātic music, to introduce in the course of the survey, the chief subjects the music lovers discuss and to show why they discuss them and to give some illustrations of the methods by which such discussions are followed. I have sought to observe that no musical theory should be included which is not capable of being made intelligible to the listener, who although possessing a little knowledge, is yet prepared to accord his best patience to its expositor. Classical music, Carnātic music in particular, is an exceedingly difficult subject and cannot with the best will in the world, be made into an easy one and, he who would follow its grindings must have at least nodding acquaintance with them. For another, it is exceedingly abstract. The twists and turns of speculative reason, the hair splitting distinctions, the abstractness of the thinking, the remoteness of conclusions reached from such thinking, all these need intense application and perseverance to follow.

In my and my colleagues' efforts to produce a comprehensive Multimedia CD on Thyāgarāja, extensive research has been done. This includes intricate study of several compositions of Thyāgarāja, the philosophy and truth in them, the grammar and construction, the message and the meaning, etc. Special commentaries on specially chosen *kriti-s* of Thyāgarāja forms an interesting and enlightening aspects both in terms of lyric and music, suitably supported by graphics. This includes well over 110 compositions (*kriti-s*) based on specific themes. I have felt that the inclusion of this information would be interesting and entertaining to the reader. Some critical chapters on *manodharma sangīta*, like *ālāpana*, *swarakalpana* and *nēraaval*, which are found hard to understand have been recast and made easier. A few special articles like, "The uniqueness

of Thyāgarāja” have been added. The book in short, has been enlarged with the hope that the additional information will be useful to the reader. Few *kṛiti-s* are supported by specially commissioned graphics beautifully drawn by the well known artists, S. Rājam and K.V. Bhīma Rāo. The book also includes thematic analysis of the compositions of Thyāgarāja ingeniously done by documentation expert T.N. Rājan.

It may seem futile to write about music, because it may be argued that music is something to be listened to and not read about. However volumes have been written about music in the past, particularly in Sanskrit and Tamil, and a good part of it is understood by a reasonably large number of people. It is only through the medium of such works that a lover of music can become fully aware of the latent power of music, and inspite of the reactions so aimless and indiscriminate at first sight, it is these works alone that one needs and perhaps desires. In my experience of well over six decades, I have found that the quality and the number of *rasikā-s* (audience) in concerts of Carnātic music are slowly and gradually dwindling. This painful fact is the serious concern of many artistes and organisers today. There is however, a good section of the audience, which does go to the concert but may not enjoy the subtleties and nuances as much as desired. What such an audience needs today is education, education to a degree of more serious involvement in a musical concert, whatever that degree is. The purpose of writing this book is to serve that need.

A good part is liberally drawn from the classic works of musicologist Prof. Sāmbamūrthy. I have added my own interpretation and analysis. If after reading this book, a listener were able to appreciate and enjoy a concert better, the purpose of this book would be served.

The subject matter being what it is, I have found it very hard to convey the message in simple language. To help the reader to understand some technical words, a glossary of important terms is included at the end of the book. Among some well wishers who helped me to complete the book, I wish to thank my brother-in-law, T.A. Sethurāman of USA, who scrupulously read through the manuscript, made due corrections and also helped me in finalizing the copy.

The book has been divided into two sections, the technical part being carried in the Appendix. In this book I confess that I have been biased towards Thyāgarāja; for, my question is where would be the whole of our concert life today if Thyāgarāja had not written his *kriti-s*? The comments are based on 700 *kriti-s* on Thyāgarāja that are accessible today. I have therefore included a special section dealing with the “uniqueness of Thyāgarāja” his works and a critical analysis of a few of his compositions (*kriti-s*). I also felt that the comments made by N.Pattabhi Rāman, Editor-in-Chief of the magazine Sruti, as a preface to my earlier book, are relevant to this book too. I have therefore included it in this book.

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January 15, 2002

Second Foreword

Being a lay music lover, the appropriateness and credentials for me to pen the foreword for a book of excellence on Carnatic music, may be suspect. Nonetheless, I agreed to write this foreword, because of my regard for the author Sri B R C Iyengar.

As one thumbs through the book, he or she is likely to experience a bliss, which is an amalgam of information, understanding and appreciation of Carnatic Music and its pristine beauty and awe. There are passages and passages for a lay person to understand and secure an insight into Carnatic music and its myriad nuances. There are dissections of technology constituting Carnatic music which will appeal to musicians and singers, who already stand on a platform of basics of music. And again, there are niche sections relating to specific areas of this genre of music, the well known among them being Rāga, Ālāpana, Tāla and of course, Grammar. Such sections will cater to connoisseurs of music, who have expertise and depth in Carnatic music and in its singing delineations.

It is very thoughtful of Sri Iyengar to have devoted a complete section on Saint Thyagaraja. No one who has credentials to write on Carnatic music can bypass mentioning the achievements and glory of the Saint. Indeed Sri Iyengar by including a section on Saint Thyagaraja has paid his respectful homage to him through authoring this book.

The life sketch of the saint refers to his compositions, the uniqueness, creativity and versatility. These add lustre to the publication. Particularly noteworthy is the author's reference to the mission of Saint Thyagaraja, his creativity and the essence of his compositions. The graphics are a delight and blend with the narrative. It cannot be gainsaid that the appendices providing technical details, the glossary and the indices enhance the value of this book. Very aptly the book is titled Raga Sudha.

Hyderabad
22-1-2003

Dr. S. Chakravarthy

Dr S Chakravarthy is a civil servant by profession. He was formerly the Special Chief Secretary, Government of Andhra Pradesh. Presently he is the President, South Indian Cultural Association, Hyderabad.

Introduction

Music concerts are being conducted for decades by cultural organisation, music lovers, patrons, and so on. Artists are performing and the audience is listening. Over a period of time, transformation has been going on continuously in the art, artiste and the attitude of the audience. The organisers are basically performing the act of bringing the artiste and the audience face to face. The immediate question that comes up is, what is it that the artiste is presenting and how much of it is being absorbed by the listener? If the latter has not progressed in his learning, why? If indeed he has learnt, how much? Has the entire scenario sustained, failed or moved forward? These are questions few have thought of and much less involved in examining it.

One gratifying feature is that the system with its own configuration continues to exist although the modalities have changed. The overall structure more or less remains the same. It is even more pleasing that the system has survived the onslaught of several external forces that have made inroads into the cultural arena. The success or sustenance is entirely due to the spontaneous and emotional communication between the art and the artiste on the one hand, and the artiste and the audience on the other. The fact however, remains that the artiste and the audience are the important and interdependent parameters for the survival and growth of Art music; one cannot survive without the other. It is, therefore, necessary to analyse in depth, the character and role of these three factors, the art, the artiste and the organiser. Way back in the thirties, all over South India, and in Tamil Nādu in particular, a large section of the common people had one means of entertainment, i.e., Classical Carnātic music. In fact, there was no other form of music so pervading. It may be for the geneticist to explain how almost every family had two things in common, namely interest in Carnātic music and a deep sense of spiritualism. It was an ideal combination for the sustenance and growth of an art like music associated with refined culture. In the past, music concerts were generally held in temples, which invariably added a sense of religious fervour. The performances would start late in the evening and would go on till the small hours of the next day. Audiences would squat in the open streets and in total silence, except for gestures of

appreciation. A concert, on average, would last for about five hours, and on some occasions, even longer. The meteoric progress in science and technology and the arrival of electronics brought in an unprecedented change. It must be acknowledged that, along with this advancement, a listener, by and large, has lost the ability to appreciate the intricacies of classical music. The reaction is; “Why should I attend a live concert when I can enjoy any type of music, any taste whatever, so easily available in my drawing room.” In today’s response of the audience, there is effect without cause; there is exaggeration without reason. Utter confusion seems to reign amongst the audience as far as music appreciation is concerned. They listen in silence or actually applaud when the performing artiste takes the most incredible liberties. People simply do not know what to look for. They have lost the critical faculty and are no longer qualified to judge. It may be startling to find this curious phrase in Santayana concerning music, “The most abstract of arts serves the dullest emotions.” A concert is not a sermon. It is a performance, a reincarnation of a series of ideas implicit in the work of art. Music, as architecture, has always held fascination for the lay mind. Music most fully mirrors man in all his infinite variety.

Listening is a talent like any other talent or gift. It varies in degree from person to person. Some underestimate and mistrust the talent; some others have the opposite approach. There is no reliable way of measuring the gift for listening. One cannot be sure how a listener reacts to music. Listening however, has its reward. There are no prizes to be won, no contests or competitions in creative listening. But he who has the gift to listen is fortunate, even if he is untrained. An ideal listener would combine the faculty of the trained professional with the innocence of the intuitive amateur. He may be too reverent or too carried away or limited in his enthusiasm for a particular school or an artiste; all the same, he is an intelligent listener. The interesting question is not whether he is deriving pleasure, but rather whether he understands the import of the music he is listening to. If he has understood, what has he understood? It must be admitted that there is no right answer for this difficult question. Musical taste begins with the ability to distinguish subtle nuances of feeling. Anyone can tell the difference between sad and joyous music

and even identify the different shades of joyousness. To approach all music in the vain hope that it will soothe one is a common error of many present day music lovers. It needs a special gift, the gift of being able to see all around the structural framework of an extended piece of music. It needs imagination, a power of balancing the combined impression made by various themes, rhythm, tonal values, harmonics, melody, contrasts, etc. Eventually it is the healthy musical curiosity and a broad musical experience that sharpens the critical faculty of even the most talented amateur.

Similarly it is the dream of every performing musician who loves his art to involve gifted listeners everywhere as an active force in the musical community. Every listener is a musical citizen! The attitude of each listener, especially the gifted listener is the principal resource in bringing to fruition the immense musical potentialities of our times.

Art and Man

"A work of art does not grow old; it is outside time and space"

Art is the first and last a human experience. And if the material of art refuses to yield an answer, we must turn to the man in whose hands it is, after all nothing more than a means to an end. All organic life existing in time is subject to alteration between tension and relaxation. This fluctuation between these two, tension and relaxation represents the rhythm of life; there is not a moment as long as we breathe in which one or the other does not prevail. Both are organically connected. Tension and relaxation are mutually dependent to a very high degree. Art has the answer to this eternal problem. Great works of art are living things are in fact, the only things that live. As art springs from personality, so it is to only to personality that it can be revealed and from the meeting of the two comes right interpretation vivid from its emotional intensity and filled with such fervent moments of elasticity or of joy. It all seems to be a dream and an illusion. Art does not hurt us. The tears that we shed at play are a type of sterile emotions that it is the function of Art to awaken. All the arts are immortal. The aim of art is simply to create a mood. Art is a passion, and in matters of art, thought is invariably coloured by emotion, and is fluid than fixed, and depending upon the moods, and exquisite moments, cannot be narrowed into the rigidity of scientific formula or as theological dogma.

There are as many artists as there are different forms of art. In that sense the domain of the painter is widely different from that of the poet, as that of the playwright is from the actor. These are the images that the artist can handle. Each form of art with which we come in contact, dominates us for the moment to the exclusion of every other form. For the time we must think of nothing else, can think of nothing else indeed.

It is sometimes said that it is the tragedy of an artist that when his ideal is not realised, it is robbed of its wonder and its mystery becomes simply a new starting point for the ideal other than itself. This is the reason why music is the perfect type of art. Music can never reveal its ultimate secret. By its imaginative beauty it makes all interpretations true and no interpretation, final. When we speak or think of art, we normally refer to visual arts like painting, photography, dance etc. because they are

images and have an immediate impact on the human mind; it registers and reflects; it eases the mood without tension. On the contrary, abstract arts like meditation or music needs some efforts to understand and appreciate. Strangely however, musical experience in man, whatever the form, is spontaneous. The more evolved he is, the more mature the music. This is one of the features, which distinguishes him from other animals, although some forms of life, like birds unwittingly hum.

Music does not merely reflect the events of life, is not merely occasioned by them, as all music had been in the past. It is not merely utilitarian music bound up with life and incorporated into it. Whatever it touches it changes life. It embraces the whole fullness of organic life and reflects a vast world of independent forms. It can do all this because it is dependent. It is in deep accord with the biological constitution of human nature. In this context, music, the highest art has no need of explanation or applied psychology; it sets down its creations and trust in their magic without fear of not being understood. No culture so far discovered lacks music. Making music appears to be one of the fundamental activities of mankind, as characteristically human as drawing and painting. We are accustomed to regarding drawing and painting as integral parts of life of early man, but less inclined to think of music in the same way.

However, music or musical sounds of some variety, are so interwoven with human life that they probably played greater part in the prehistory than can be determined. If we find that a piece of music *moves us*, we mean that it arouses us, that it effects physically. Bodily involvement always implies nodding in time, weeping or vocalising. While singing, the difficulty that some concertgoers experience in controlling their impulse to move to music is significant. We grieve but our grief is not bitter. In the actual life of a man, sorrow, as Spinoza says, is a passage to a lesser perfection. But the sorrow, with which Art fills us, both purifies and initiates. Through Art and Art only, that we can shield ourselves from the sordid perils of actual existence. For, emotion for the sake of emotion is the aim of Art, and emotion for the sake of action is the aim of life, and of that practical organisation of life, that we call society.

Music excels life, enhances life and gives it meaning. Great music outlives the individual who created it. It is both personal and beyond the

personal. For those who love it, it remains as a fixed point of reference in an unpredictable world. Music is a source of reconciliation, exhilarate and hope which never fails. As for Nietzsche, music has been “Something for the sake of which it is worthwhile to live on earth”. It is irreplaceable, undeserved transcendental blessing. However, to the creative artiste, space, time, causality and the content of perception are essential realities; he cannot doubt them, for they are his only means of representing anything convincingly.

Not only medicine but also engineering and painting are arts. Living itself is an art. In fact, the most important and at the same time most difficult and complex and to be practised by man is the art of living. Its object is not this or that specialised performance but of living by the process of developing and going to that, which is potential. In the art of living, “Man is both the artist and the object of his art”; he is the sculptor and the marble; the physician and the patient. To die is poignantly bitter, but the idea of having to die without having lived well, is unbearable. Humanistic ethics, for which “good” is synonymous with good and “bad” with bad for man, proposes that in order to know what is good for man, we have to know his nature. There is science in “the art of living”. Related to irrational fear of death is the fear of growing old. It is established that the person who lives productively before he is old by no means deteriorates; on the contrary, the mental and emotional qualities he develops in the process of productive living continue to grow although physical vigour wanes.

To sum up, good in humanistic ethics is the affirmation of life, the unfolding of man’s powers: Virtue is the responsibility towards his own existence; evil constitutes the crippling of man’s powers; vice is irresponsibility towards himself.



The origin of music

"Music moves the heart, excites nerves, arrests and engages the acutest intelligence"

One of the most debated and controversial questions in the field of music is its origin. From time immemorial philosophers and artists alike have expressed various questions and theories on the subject, but the question remains baffling to human understanding. The subject can yet be analysed and the reader given the option to arrive at his own conclusion. If nothing else, it gives some food for thought.

The first instinct of a human being, when in crisis, like a severe shock or intense trauma is to shout at the top of one's voice. It is emotional and psychological. Scientifically speaking, it is produced at the highest pitch and at a constant frequency. If it is a woman, it is at one pitch and if it is a man, it is at another. Since these are different, but yet constant, they can be referred to as different sounds; they also correspond to some musical "notes", however varied they are. To state more clearly, they are separate units with constant auditory waveforms, which can be repeated and imitated. Contrary to this, if a group of people, both men and women shout, each such sound, at different frequencies clash and produce the opposite, namely noise. The first causality in such an event is harmony. Individual notes of differing frequencies when played in succession produce a sequence of sound. They may be concordant or discordant. When concordant, it is comfortable to put up with, because it sounds harmonious and therefore melodious. The opposite of this is discordant and disquieting. This interpretation may sound as a crude example to differentiate sound from noise. In nature, calls between animals, except bird songs are irregular noises and not sustained notes of different pitch, which go to form music.

The next question therefore is, can the sound produced by other species be related to music? Research has proved that birds employ both noise and sound in their communication in functions like advertising or warning or even in search of a mate, but the content of definable notes is far more in excess than noise. According to an American ornithologist, bird song shows variations of both pitch and tempo, change of key and variation on theme. Slow playing of some bird songs is said to correspond to some expressions of Beethoven's symphonies. Some even

are said to have made use of bird songs in their compositions! It is the brief temporal span of the bird's repeated patterns that distinguishes it from human music; it does not last more than a few seconds. It is not music by itself; tonal elements become music only by virtue of their being organised. It needs the conscious of human act. It is however, interesting to note that sounds produced by some subhuman primates like "galada" monkeys, resemble rhythms, notes and types of vocalisations. During the course of human evolution, it is possible that rhythm and melody were used to resolve emotional conflicts. No culture so far discovered lacks music. Just like drawing and painting, music seems to be one of the fundamental activities of mankind. Palaeolithic cave paintings draw the attention of this form of art.

It is possible to believe that music developed from the lulling of infants, a spontaneous yet untrained faculty on the part of the mother. Even more mysterious effect is the reaction of the child. It is said that at the age of three, infants can identify the sounds produced by different people. Therefore if lulling melodies are dependent upon musical output, it is possible that music indeed develop from infant lulling. What we perceive here is a tune in succession of separate notes. It is we who make it into continuous melody. It is a process where one particular note is followed by another of a higher or lower pitch. But such a combination should bring out a feeling of exquisite pleasure, emotional intensity and moments of joy.

Earliest language like *vēda* was chanted. They were melodic and poetic than prosaic and practical. Even in today's chanting of *vēda-s* one can make out three musical notes. In Carnātic music they correspond to *panchama*, the fifth note in the scale, *shudha dhaivata*, the sixth note and *shudha madhyama*, the fourth note. In reciting these notes the process involuntarily showed the way to *shudha rishabha*. The reference point to all these notes naturally is the *ādhāra shadja* or the tonic note. As the frequency of the tonic note changed or shifted, there was a corresponding shift of the other four notes. This minimum configuration and relationship established the required parameters to envisage a *rāga* or melody in Indian music. It is also said that the primitive men sang to one another to express their feelings before they spoke to another.

It will never be possible to establish the origin of human music with any certainty. The best we can do is to accomplish some rational thinking. It is wise to conclude, "Human attitudes and specially human ways of thinking about the world are the results of dance and song".

Indian music today

Indian music is modal music. To listen to Indian music needs special talent. Carnātic music is even more complicated. No other system is so intricate as Carnātic music. It must be admitted that only a small percentage in a gathering can really understand and enjoy it in true terms.

Unlike Western classical music, like symphony, where the conductor is the leading figure, in Indian music, it is the performing artiste who is the celebrity. Since good part of Carnātic music is creative, the listener can always hope to be rewarded with something new every time and at every moment. It is this thrill that sustains his interest. We must first recognise that there is an established format. In a concert, there is a trend, an order, a *paddhati*, as it is referred to. Before going into these details, it is worthwhile to examine other parameters, like the auditorium, the knowledge of the listeners, the sound amplification systems, the acoustics, the stage arrangements etc., which may not be directly related to the concert music as such, but yet have a commanding influence on the performance.

The Audience and the Auditorium

Decades back there was nothing like an auditorium; people used to assemble in the temple premises. Listeners would sit wherever there was place and as close to the singer as possible. There was no formality, no chief guests, no speeches and no waste of time as we find today. What was most important was communication between the artiste and the audience, the feedback and the response. The audience was knowledgeable and responsive and the singer had to give his best. Once started the concert would go on uninterrupted and as the concert progressed it would gain increasing musical value. The audience would react spontaneously.

The quality of audience has changed over a period of time and in keeping with this change, the format of a concert has also undergone a

corresponding change. Modern auditoriums are streamlined. The artiste is pushed back from the listeners who sit in a poorly lit hall. The communication has snapped between the two that has largely affected the creativity of the artiste. Today the audience consists of a select gathering of people. It consists of you and me. It is a motley and innocent crowd. It has assembled for entertainment. It is obviously interested in Carnātic music; otherwise it would not be there. Each one of them attends such concerts regularly and each one of them enjoys the music in his/her own way. This means every one of them has an ear for technical as well as melodic content, but may not be able to identify it. How does this heterogeneous crowd listen and enjoy?

The amplification of the sound introduced in the recent past is another factor, which is adversely affecting the quality of music and its influence on the audience. Unwanted frequencies are amplified and the melody is destroyed. Most artists cannot perform without a powerful system of amplification. Musical values are misinterpreted through this means and the listener is unable to distinguish good from the not so good. Today it is one of the dangers threatening the whole fabric of music. The acoustics in many of the auditoriums is not satisfactory and quality music comes out in a corrupt way.

The performing platform or the stage should be large enough to accommodate about 10 to 15 people, namely the main artiste, his accompanists and their prime disciples. The traditional concert group consists of the main artiste, vocal or instrumental, his disciples, not more than two, one of whom may be a supporting artiste, the *tambūra* artiste, the accompanying artists on the violin, *mridangam*, *ghatam*, *mhōrsing*, *kanjira* (*kanjari*) etc. Care must be taken not to focus bright lights on the artists. The atmosphere should be still, which naturally infuses a sense of spiritualism. With this background, we now get to know the details of the format of a concert (Ref. Chapter - Format of a concert) and try to understand these. A concert has a traditional and established format. It has a structure. It has to start in a particular way, continue on certain norms, reach the zenith, gracefully recede and finally end. To appreciate a classical concert, let us try to follow the same norms, in seriatim, and analyse its components.

Swara and Sruti

"Only a relationship between tones constitute music, never a tone in isolation"

Indian music is modal music. It is based on a stable unchanging sound called the tonic note (*ādhāra shadja*) and its independent relationship with the successive notes. This relationship of each note determines its meaning. In other words, in music, vocal or instrumental the *ādhāra shadja* is repeated and constantly heard. This constant sounding is very important in Indian music because it provides the melody for the notes and melodic inventiveness. In truth, this is more intricate experience than it appears, for there is not just a single note being played in a *tambūra* but at least two and in combination with other notes rich harmonics and overtones are also produced.

It is pertinent to refer to other stringed instruments that were used to provide the drone, before the advent of the *tambūra*. These instruments are still in vogue amongst folk musicians. They perform the same function as the *tambūra* but do not give the same effect. Some of these instruments have a single string, called *yazh* or *ek-tāra*, and some with two strings called *ramsagar*; the two strings in the instrument are tuned to *sa* and *pa*. The use of these instruments to provide the drone dates back to 16th or 17th century.

In a classical music concert, one would have watched the *tambūra* occupying the prime place. In a Hindustani music concert there may even be two. Well before the commencement of the concert, the artist would spend considerable time in tuning it by applying his ear very close to the instrument. This exercise is known as "tuning the *tambūra* to the required *sruti*." The question obviously arises, what is "tuning a *tambūra*"?, what is "*sruti*"? In terms of common usage, the *sruti* or pitch of voice varies from singer to singer. In a few cases, however, it may be common, as in the case of duet singers or duet players. And now, how does one know one's own *sruti* and fix it up? *Sruti* here means the convenient range of the artiste's voice covering two extreme limits, the lowest and the highest his vocal chords can comfortably reach.

In Carnātic music, there are three basic notes that constitute the *sruti*, the boundaries, as it were. They are the *ādhāra shadja* or the tonic note in the scale. The rest of the *swara*-s in the scale are based with reference

to this note. The second is *panchama*, the fifth note in the scale, and the third, the *tāra shadja* of the higher octave. One would have noticed that there are generally four strings in a *tambūra*. The middle two strings in a *tambūra* are called the *saranai* and *anusaranai*. In tuning the *tambūra*, these two strings are tuned to a particular frequency, with reference to *ādhāra shadja* or the tonic note. The frequency of these two strings must be identical; this is very crucial. The string to the right of the middle two strings, as the *tambūra* is held upright, corresponds to *panchama*, the fifth note in the scale. To tune this string perfectly is a difficult job for a beginner. The gauge or thickness of this string is also more when compared to the middle strings. Similarly the string to the left of the middle two strings, called the *mandara* is set to the *shadja* of the lower octave. When all the strings are played continuously, the primary notes, *sa* (of the lower octave), *pa* and *sa* (of the higher octave) come out in that sequence and if the *sruti* is perfectly set, the complementary notes, *gāndhāra*, *madhyama* and *nishāda* are also heard producing a grand and pleasing sound (melody) of all the notes in the framework of music. The *tambūra* basically produces a permanent fixed sound referred to as *ādhāra shadja* or the tonic note. The successive notes have an independent relationship with the tonic note; in other words the tonic note determines the meaning or relationship with each note. It is therefore necessary that the tonic note be persistently heard. This provides the basis for comparison and contrast for different notes. In essence it provides the basis for melody and melodic improvisations.

There is a simple but crucial operation in tuning the *tambūra*, which brings out what is called the *jīva* (life) of the instrument. Located at the pot portion (*kudam*) of the *tambūra* at the base, is a small bridge about four inches wide and half inch in height. All the strings pass over this bridge. Beneath each string, at a crucial place, is inserted a piece of yarn. Set at the right placement, when the string is plucked, an electrifying resonance is produced. This is called the *jīva*. If the yarn is away even by a fraction of a millimetre, the string may still vibrate but will fail to resonate. By a slight technical improvisation, the *sruti* thus tuned can be altered to what is called the *madhyama sruti*. The improvisation is to change the frequency of the *panchama* string to a higher frequency

corresponding to that of *madhyama* in the scale. The singer then uses the note *madhyama* as *ādhāra shadja* or the tonic note. The mode is therefore shifted and the rest of the *swara-s* get set to the corresponding frequencies. This *sruti* is particularly useful in singing some songs, which fall within certain frequency range.

After this preliminary procedure, the violin and *mridangam* accompanists in their turn tune their instruments to the same *sruti*. The percussion specialists the *ghata* and the *kanjira* (*kanjari*) cannot do this because their instruments have their *sruti* permanently set. Hence they have to select the instrument nearest to the *sruti*. The completion of the formalities signals the commencement of the concert.



The Varnam

"A real musician should have a very wide range and compass"

The most essential part of a concert is *kachchēri dharma*; there is a code of ethics to be followed and is twofold, one from the side of the artiste and another from the audience. An artiste is the custodian or repository of art. Thus, he owes a responsibility and duty to society. He has to perform what he has achieved, apart from owning a duty to the art. The prestige of art must be maintained at any cost and he should try to give the best in him. A successful performer is one, who at the conclusion of the concert leaves in the mind of the audience a lasting memory of pleasure and satisfaction. This is a flexible statement because the audience consists of various sections that have different tastes and ability of understanding. In a situation like this, the work of the artiste turns out to be very difficult; he has to please both the common and the connoisseur.

To meet the requirement of a majority of the audience, a general pattern or theme in a concert is in the usage. The artiste however, has the liberty to move about, within these parameters. This applies both to the vocal and instrumental music concerts. According to *sampradāya* (tradition), a classical music concert can generally be divided into three sections. Initially the artiste warms up and builds up the tempo. He later leads the audience to tonally moving musical forms, richer classicism, spiritual and emotional content and finally to the lighter side of music. For more refer chapter "The format of a concert". A classical Carnātic music concert generally starts with a *varnam*. There are two types of *varnam*, *tānavarnam* and *padavarnam*. A *varnam* is preset music (*kalpita sangīta*); it comes out naturally and instinctively. The artiste need not put in special efforts. There is no chance of committing errors; it only requires intense rehearsals. Thus, in starting a concert with a *varnam*, the artiste relieves himself of a possible tension so prevalent at the commencement of the concert. It gives him an opportunity to align himself perfectly with the *sruti* (drone). It helps him to judge the acoustics of the auditorium, the arrangements of the sound system, the initial response of the audience. The most important fact however, is, he gets into communication with his accompanists and his listeners. Each in

the team of the performers, will be able to assess the competence of the other. Starting the concert without a *varnam* has many handicaps. In its structure, the *varnam* is similar to a *kriti* having three sections (*anga-s*), the *pallavi*, *anupallavi* and *charana*, but the grammar is different. The *sāhitya* is simpler, limited. The *charana* contains a special feature called *chittaswara* (solfa syllables). The *chittaswara-s* are skilfully coined and set in order of one, two or four *āvarta-s* (cycle) of the *tāla*. The first group of these *swara-s* is generally intricate in *swara* component and rhythmic content. These solfa syllables in every *varnam* are generally unique combinations of the *swara-s* in the corresponding *rāga* and therefore, knowledge of many *varnam-s* will help in working out *swara* patterns in creative music. In rendering these *varnam-s*, the *pallavi* and the *anupallavi* are generally presented in a particular speed and the *charana*, in double that speed. While there are *varnam-s* set to various *tāla-s*, most of them fall under the group of *ādi* or *ata tāla*. All the *varnam-s* in *ādi tāla* commence with the first beat of the *tāla* (*samam*), but those set to *ata tāla*, commence after two counts (*aksharakāla-s*). A *varnam* set to *ata tāla* is relatively more difficult to sing, particularly in the faster speed, which speaks of the competence of the artiste. With the completion of the *varnam*, the artiste moves on to a *kriti* or *rāga ālāpana*. Having mentioned the word, *kriti*, let us examine what a *kriti* means.



Kīrtana and Kriti

"The music sang music and poetry at one and the same time"

Carnātic Music is said to be as old as the *vēda-s*. Early music was essentially devotional and was recited in the form of what is called a *kīrtana*, a form of musical poetry. Many compositions of Purandaradāsa and Annamāchārya bear resemblance to *kīrtana-s*. On the contrary, the term *kriti* refers to the composition, where claim to permanence lies principally in its music and not in its lyric (*sāhitya*). In *kīrtana-s*, the lyric is of primary importance. *Kriti-s* are *dhātu pradhāna rachanas*. Aesthetic content and *sangīta kavita* are important. *Kīrtana-s* are older than *kriti-s*; in fact, a *kriti* as a song form is an offshoot of *kīrtana*. Though considerable evolution had taken place earlier, it was the Tallapakka composers (1400-1500 AD) who are said to be the first to write *kīrtana-s* with the respective *anga-s* (sections of a composition). Words in *kīrtana-s* are many and the *charana-s* are sung to the same *dhātu*. The take off or the starting point in a *kīrtana* is simple. Anybody can easily learn a *kīrtana*. They are essentially meant for group singing because they are generally confined to a single octave. As opposed to all this, a *kriti* has a special appeal and approach. The *sāhitya* has an ethical and pointed theme. The music is complex; there is more of grammar. A *kriti* always conveys much of *rāga bhāva* (melody) and extends from one to two octaves. To render a *kriti* one needs considerable amount of musical training. It is essentially an aesthetic expression. In its structure a *kriti* is more evolved; the *anga-s* like the *pallavi*, *anupallavi* and *charana* are essential contents. While a *kriti* has usually one *pallavi* and *anupallavi*, it may have many *charana-s*. Some *kriti-s* called *samashticharanam* are devoid of *anupallavi*. The *pallavi* of a *kriti* generally starts at a lower octave, but this is not a rule. Many compositions do start at the higher octaves. This starting point called *eduppu* has a reliance on the *rāga bhāva* and the *swara-s* (notes), which give life to the *rāga*. For instance *kriti-s* in the *rāga pantuvarāli*, start at or above the middle octave, while those in *pūrvikalyāni* commence at *ādhāra shadja* or *antara gāndhāra*. This will immediately identify the distinctive *swara*, *dhaivata* in the two *rāga-s* referred above. Compositions in major *rāga-s* like *tōdi* or *śankarābharana* are framed to

begin at any of the *swara-s* in the corresponding cycle of the *rāga*; they are versatile in their content. A *kriti* can generally be divided into two sections, the first half, comprising *pallavi* and *anupallavi*, which together generally tally with the second half, i.e., the *charana*. Each *vāggeyakāra* (composer) has his own style of composing and a seasoned *rasika* can easily identify the composition as that of a particular composer. For instance, the compositions of Dīkshitar are in Sanskrit and they generally move in a slow tempo (*vilambakāla*); the *rāga bhāva* is rich. Those of Thyāgarāja are mostly in simple spoken language and the lyric is captivating. Those of Patnam Subramania Iyer are generally set to a faster tempo (*madhyamakāla*), while the compositions of Shyāma Sāstry have intricate rhythmic (*laya*) patterns. The general theme of each composer is different. It may be devotional, descriptive, romantic, etc. The composer of a *kriti* is called a *vāggeyakāra*. He is not only a composer but a performer too. In his compositions he generally coins his own true or pseudo name in the *charana*. If the composition has more than one *charana*, the name will appear in the last *charana*. The name so entered is called the *mudra*. Some of the well known *mudra-s* are, Thyāgarāja in his compositions, Guruguha for Muthuswāmi Dīkshitar, Shyāma Sāstry as Shyāmakrishna in his compositions, Padmanābha for Swāti Tirunal, Śrīnivāsa in Rāmnād Śrīnivāsa Iyengar's compositions, Venkatēsa for Patnam Subramania Iyer, Murali for Bālamurali Krishna, Harikēsha in case of Muthiah Bhāgavatar, Rāmadāsa for Pāpanāsam Sivan, Purandaravittala for Purandaradāsa, etc. Besides these, some *vāggeyakāra-s* weave the *rāga* names in their compositions. These are called *rāga mudra-s*. For instance, almost every composition of Dīkshitar has the *rāga mudra*; for example, in the *kriti*, *śrī viswanātham bhajēham*, the *rāga* name *śrī* is dexterously weaved. The qualifications of a *vāggeyakāra* are very rigid; all cannot compose *kriti-s*. It requires profound knowledge of music, both as science and art, its history, grammar etc. Basically a *kriti* set to a particular *rāga* must bring out the essence of the *rāga* in totality. Many of the factors like, *laya*, *bhāva*, prosody, grammar, all must be combined in proper proportion. It is only then that the *kriti* can live for centuries and get more and more polished. A *kriti* can be rendered a million times, with no trace of boredom, giving

endless scope for creativity. The greatness of a composition lies in its vitality and strength to live for centuries.

Decorative Components

There are several other decorative devices in a *kriti* like, *sangati-s*, *chittaswara-s*, *swarāksharas* (*swara-sāhitya*), *yati-s*, *yamaka*, *manipravāla*, etc. They are explained in brief.

Sangati-s are integral and indispensable parts of a *kriti*. *Kriti-s* are enriched by *sangati-s*, which in essence, are variations of a musical theme, developed step by step, in all the three *anga-s* (sections) of a *kriti*, the *pallavi*, *anupallavi* and *charana*. They are well thought out and built-up phrases, based both on *bhāva* and *laya*, maintaining a balanced proportion. Depending upon the mood and *manodharma* (creative faculty), an experienced and knowledgeable musician, may also come out with new and innovative *sangati-s* extempore in a concert. *Sangati* however, has no place in other forms of music like, *varnam*, *gītam* and *swarajati*. The *sangati-s* may be *bhāva* oriented as in the *kriti*, *marivērē* in *ānandabhairavi* or *laya* oriented as in the *kriti*, *chakkani rājamārgamu* in *kharaharapriya*.

Chittaswara is another decorative element in a *kriti*. These are a set of well-coined *swara-s* within a limited space of time or cycle (*āvarta*), normally associated with the *anupallavi* and *charana*. In the latter case, these solfa syllables may be substituted with appropriate *sāhitya* also, thus maintaining continuity. Examples are, *sakēta nagaranāta* in *harikāmbhōji*, *ō jagadāmba* in *ānandabhairav*. These *chittaswara-s* may be set to *vilambakāla* or *madhyamakāla* and may lead to an attractive conclusion. The most magnificent *chittaswara-s* are found in the compositions of Rāmnād Śrīnivāsa Iyengar.

Swarākshara-s or *swara-sāhitya-s* is yet another innovative component of a *kriti*, where the letters of the lyric correspond to the *swara-s* (notes) in the melody. It may also be a phrase. An example of the former is the phrase *nī* (meaning you) in the song *nī bhajanagāna* in *rāga*, *nāyaki*, while in the *bhairavi rāga* song *sari evvaramma*, there are several phrases corresponding to the *swara-s*.

Yati is a decorative device (*alankāra*) in a *kriti*. There are essentially two types of *yati*-s, called *gopuccha* and *śrōthōvaha*. In a *gopuccha yati* or (*dhātu mātu samyukta alankāra*), the phrases in the text gradually diminish as the *sāhitya* progresses, yet maintaining the basic structure of the *kriti*, as in the following *kriti* of Dīkshitar, in *rāga*, *ānandabhairavi*.

Thyāgarāja yōga vaibhavam

Agarāja yōga vaibhavam

Rājayōga vaibhavam

Yōga vaibhavam

Vaibhavam

Bhavam

Vam

As opposed to this, when the phrases regularly increase, as in the following *charana* of the above *kriti* the *yati* is called *śrōthōvaha*.

Śam prakāśam

Swarūpa prakāśam

Thathwaswarūpa prakāśam

Sakalathathwa swarūpa prakāśam

Śivaśkathyādisakalathathwa swarūpa prakāśam

Yamaka is a kind of *alankāra* where the same word is used in a composition in more than one sense. Patnam Subramania Iyer's *kriti* in *rāga*, *ābhōgi*, is a fine example of *yamaka*:

Mana sahasa (our cleverness)

Mana sādhyamu (our capacity)

Manasāra venkateśa (with all the heart)

Mana sāradhiyani (our sāradhi, pārthasārathi)

Manipravāla kriti may have words of two or more languages combined in consonance with grammar and prosody. The following *kriti* of Dīkshitar in praise of Thyāgarāja brings out the literary beauty: It is a combination of Telugu and Tamil.

Nityamangala swarūpiaina Śrīnagaramunandu putti (Telugu)

Śrīnāradamuni arulāl | Ghānaśāstra marmamulanu (Tamil, Telugu)

Karuthudanē unarndu | Bhānuvamśhatilaka krupaku (Tamil, Telugu)

Mahimaivarunda kīrtanaigal | Mānavulaku mōkshamichē (Tamil, Telugu)

There are several such compositions with combination of *Tamil*, *Telugu* and *Sanskrit*.

All in all, the inputs in terms of rhythm, harmony, instrumentation and execution of the details are concerned; much depends upon the performing artiste and his ingenuity. The references made above are only some serving tools; each one of them is open for colossal imagination and improvisation. The fact is again and again emphasized that music is conceptual and is open for vast visualization



Rāga

"Happiness and sorrow play like sunlight and shadow through music, swiftly, innocently "

Rāga or rāga ālāpana is a vital part of a concert. Before starting the *kṛiti*, a performing musician gives a short or a detailed sketch of *rāga*. To know what *rāga* is, we should know some more details of *swara-s*, which make up the *rāga*. Children singing *sa ri ga ma pa dha ni sa* is a household ritual; at any rate it used to be. These notes starting from *sa* and ending up in *ni* are called the *sapta swara-s*, or the seven notes. To state in simple terms, "that which is able to please of its own accord is a *swara*." The basis or the foundation for all systems of music is the seven notes or the *swara-s*, just like the seven days of the week or the seven colours of the rainbow. Among these, two *swara-s*, *sa* and *pa* are changeless (*avikṛita*), which means that they do not admit any variations in frequencies. Of the the remaining, *ri ga dha ni* admit three variations each in the order of increasing frequencies, one closer to the next higher *swara* and the other closer to the next lower *swara*, leaving the *ma* which has only two variations. Although these are the variations, within them there are some *swara-s* that have common frequencies. Deleting them from the list, we actually arrive at 12 workable *swara-s*. While volumes can be written on the subject of *swara-s*, this probably is the simplest interpretation to make the reader understand about the existence and usage of the 12 workable *swara-s*.

Indian music as already stated, is modal music. The individuality of the mode is established by *swara-s* (notes) of different frequencies and structure. As discussed above, there are only 12 basic *swara-s*, which form the skeletons of the entire gamut of *rāga-s*; theoretically, the twelve *swara-s* give rise to as many as 34,776 *rāga-s* by sheer permutation and combination. Incredible! It is not just the inter-relationship between the *swara-s* that establish the *rāga*, although it is an integral part. More important is the relationship of these *swara-s* to the basic note or the tonic note, namely the *ādhāra shadja* as referred to earlier. In other words, the frequency of any sound produced has relevance only when it is read in conjunction with the tonic note (which is taken as the standard); otherwise it makes no sense; it remains an irrelevant frequency.

A noteworthy feature is, even though the *rāga* is built on the basis of a sequence of *swara-s*, the drone of the *tambūra* will be spelling out the *ādhāra shadja* all the time, loud and clear, so much so, the said reliance is constantly maintained. It is therefore, established that no *rāga* can be without *ādhāra shadja*. For instance, if the drone is stopped, whatever be the combination with the *swara-s*, it will fall flat without the help of the *ādhāra shadja*, unless it is pronounced vocally or on the instrument. We therefore see the importance of *sruti* while singing a *rāga* or music in general. Even otherwise, the presence of tonic note is presumed. This is how memory indirectly plays another important role in music. True, a combination of *swara-s*, as stated above, produces a *rāga*. To have a melodic entity however, a *rāga* must take at least five *swara-s* of a scale just as a minimum of three lines is necessary to form a triangle. *Madhyama* and *panchama* being *samvādi swara-s* (consonantal or unison of sounds) of *shadja*, it is necessary that one of the two should be present in a *rāga*. The obvious corollary is, that though a large number of *rāga-s* are theoretically possible with the 12 *swara-s*, a majority of them do not have melodic content. For more information on *swara-s*, refer to Appendix.

Classification of Rāga-s

Classification of *rāga-s* is a complex subject. It may not be necessary for the reader to know academic details. However, understanding the basics will help him to appreciate the complexities to some extent, which in turn, may help him to appreciate the musical features so involved. An example will help. Just as the fauna of a country, the *rāga-s* in Carnātic Music can also be scientifically classified. For instance, we have in nature different types of trees, tall trees, tiny plants, shrubs, poisonous ones, medicinal ones, flowering plants, thorny ones, evergreen trees, etc. Take the flowering plants, there are some beautiful to look at, some with strong smell, and some without any smell at all. Going further, if we consider only one type of flowering plant, say Rose, we know that all rose plants have thorns. They may have some such common character, but within them there are many varieties, with different colours, smell, size, etc. Likewise, the *rāga-s* in Carnātic music have classified arrangement.

We are now aware that there are only 12 *swara-s* that are utilised in the entire gamut of *rāga* concept. Adopting a simple procedure of permutation and combination of these *swara-s* in a cogent way, different *rāga-s* are arrived at. Music, according to our ancient texts is traced from *archika* (one note), *ghatika* (two notes), *samika* (three notes), *swarāntara* (four notes) *audava* (five notes), *shādava* (six notes) and *sampūrna* (seven notes). Organised music at its earliest stage was confined to four notes. Gradually it was realised that a combination of seven notes in ascending and descending order in that sequence would give a complete picture of a *rāga*. In this context, two terms must be explained. The arrangement of the seven *swara* in the ascending order of increasing frequency is called *ārohana*; similarly the arrangement of the same set of *swara* in the descending order of decreasing frequencies is called *avarohana*. These two terms are commonly used in the language of music. To give an example, take for instance the *rāga*, *kalyāni*. It has all the *sapta swara-s* in the *ārohana* in increasing frequencies and in the *avarohana* in decreasing frequencies. We thus arrive at one set of *rāga-s* that have all *sapta swara-s* in the *ārohana* and the same set of *swara-s* in the *avarohana*. The point to be noted here is that both in *ārohana* and *avarohana*, the *swara-s* are identical. There are only 72 such possibilities. These 72 *rāga-s* are called the *janaka rāga-s*, because it is this set of *rāga-s*, which give birth to a multitude of *rāga-s*. They are also called *mēlakarta rāga-s* or *mēla rāga-s*. To clarify further, a *rāga* may have all the seven *swara-s* both in *ārohana* and *avarohana*, but even if one *swara* in the group is of a different frequency, either way, it cannot be branded as a *mēlakarta rāga*. To quote an example, the *rāga*, *bhairavi* has all the seven notes both in *ārohana* and *avarohana*, but the frequency of *dhaivata* is different in *ārohana* from that in *avarohana* and, therefore, does not constitute a *mēlakarta rāga*. *Bhairavi* is a derivative of the *mēlakarta rāga*, *natabhairavi*. There are many such examples. The new *rāga-s* that are derived or born out of *mēlakarta* or *janaka rāga* are naturally called *janya rāga-s*. We thus have two major groups of *rāga-s*, *janaka* and *janya*. One point has to be clarified in this context. Though less than seven *swara* in the *ārohana* and/or *avarohana* can create a *rāga*, a minimum of five *swara* is essential to constitute a complete

framework of a *rāga*. Further sub-division of *janya rāga-s*, to some extent, is also worth knowing. While a *mēlakarta rāga* has all the seven *swara-s* both in *ārohana* and *avarohana*, the *janya rāga* may have 5-*audava*, 6-*shādava* and 7-*sampūrna swara-s* in both *ārohana* and/or *avarohana*. Eight such possibilities are:

Kind of janya rāga	Ārohana – Avarohana	Rāga	Kriti
<i>shādava – sampūrna</i>	<i>srgmpds – sndpmgrs</i>	<i>kāmbhōji</i>	<i>evarimāta vinnavō</i>
<i>audava – sampūrna</i>	<i>srgpds – sndpmgrs</i>	<i>bilahari</i>	<i>paridāna michitē</i>
<i>sampūrna – shādava</i>	<i>srgmpdns – sdpmgrs</i>	<i>bhairavam</i>	<i>mariyāda gādayya</i>
<i>sampūrna – audava</i>	<i>srgmpdns – sndmgs</i>	<i>sāramati</i>	<i>mōkshamu galadā</i>
<i>shādava – shādava</i>	<i>srgmdns – sndmgs</i>	<i>śrīranjani</i>	<i>bhuvini dāsudanē</i>
<i>shādava – audava</i>	<i>srgmdns – sndmgs</i>	<i>nātakuranji</i>	<i>amba pāhi janani</i>
<i>audava – shādava</i>	<i>srgmpds – sndpmrs</i>	<i>saraswati</i>	<i>anurāgamu lēni</i>
<i>audava – audava</i>	<i>srgpds – sdpgs</i>	<i>mōhana</i>	<i>nanu pālimpa</i>

To sum up what has been said about the *rāga-s* so far, a *rāga* is built up through the combination and interrelationship of the basic seven notes of different frequencies in conformity with the recognised aesthetic laws, always with reference to the *ādhāra shadja*, the tonic note. *Rāga-s* can be broadly classified into two groups, the *mēlakarta (janaka) rāga* and *janya rāga*. While the former has all the seven notes of specified and successive frequencies, vis-a-vis the *rāga* under reference, in the ascending (*ārohana*) and descending (*avarohana*) order, in a *janya rāga* the frequency of a single *swara* may be different in *ārohana* and *avarohana*, although the *rāga* may have all the seven *swara-s*. Thus even if it means a different frequency of a single *swara*, it cannot be accommodated in the group of *janaka rāga-s*. It may further be classified into eight varieties depending upon the number of *swara* that get deleted, either in the *ārohana* or *avarohana* or both. The scale of the *janya rāga* has a direct bearing on the *swara* of the *janaka rāga*.

When *krama sampūrna* is maintained, i.e., all the seven *swara-s* appear in the order of succession in *ārohana* and *avarohana*, there is no irregularity. Further classification of *janya rāga-s* will lead to greater confusion. However, the understanding of the classification of *mēlakarta rāga-s* to a limited extent is required. In this effort, the role of the *swara*,

madhyama is significant. To start with, these 72 *mēlakarta rāga-s* are divided into two groups. In the first 36, the *shudha madhyama* (note of the lower frequency) occurs as a constant note and in the second group of 36 i.e., from 37 to 72, the *prati madhyama* (of higher frequency) occurs as a constant note. Thus in reality, if the *shudha madhyama* in the first 36 *rāga-s* is replaced by *prati madhyama*, without any change in the rest of the *swara*, it makes an ocean of difference and a fresh crop of 36 more *rāga-s* are arrived at. For instance, if *shudha madhyama* in the *rāga śankarābharana* is replaced by *prati madhyama*, it gives rise to the *rāga, kalyāni*. Thus, the note *madhyama* acts as a fulcrum in the major classification of *mēlakarta rāga-s*. A table showing the classification of the *mēlakarta rāga-s* is found in the Appendix.



Gamaka : The essence of melodic structure

"If we find that a piece of music moves us, we mean that it arouses us."

Let us now deal with *rāga* elaboration, which is referred to as *ālāpana*. In Hindustani music *ālāpana* is called *ālāp*. Since *ālāpana* is essentially *manodharma sangīta*, it is necessary to explain what *manodharma* means. This can be elucidated with a suitable illustration. Take for instance, the Western Musical concert. In say, a symphony, there are several players on different instruments, sometimes as many as a hundred; but there is only one conductor who guides them and directs them. He has choreographed the entire operation, as to which instrument should be played when, how and how long. Each participant has been supplied with worked out notation as far as he is concerned. The concerned artiste has to play according to the notation. In other words, it is the conductor who plays the main role and not the performer. The conductor is primary and the performer secondary. The conductor guides the piece already composed. Even so, the conductor has limited role. It is in essence readymade music or what is referred to as *kalpita sangīta*. On the contrary, in Carnātic music, whether the artiste sings *ālāpana* for five minutes or fifty minutes, it depends entirely on the proficiency of the performer. All he does is creation of new ideas on the spot or extempore. The ideas generate as the artiste sings or plays. This is in contrast to *kalpita sangīta* and is referred to as *manodharma sangīta*. The *manodharma* content in Carnātic music is pre-eminent.

Before describing how *ālāpana* is expected to be developed, it is necessary to get familiar with a few aspects of the decorative features of *ālāpana* the most important of which is *gamaka*. In *ālāpana*, *gamaka* contributes to a fair measure of melody. *Gamaka*, as explained in glossary "is the collective term given to the various shakes, graces, ornaments and embellishments used in Indian music". According to Bharata, "Music without *gamaka* is like a moonless night, a river without water, a creeper without flowers, a lady without ornaments and a flower without smell". *Gamaka* is produced by shake or quiver of the *swara* in a particular way and thus pleases the listener. "*Swarasyakampō gamakaha, śrothruchit sukhāvaha*", meaning, that which produces *sukha* (pleasure) by applying quiver to the *swara* is called *gamaka*. *Gamaka* is inseparable

from even the smallest phrase. It is not mere accidental ornament; it also enhances the melodic content of *ālāpana*. The remote resemblance to *gamaka* in Western music is Vibrato or Portamento. In *kriti-s*, *gamaka* is woven into the structure. To trace the antiquity of *gamaka*, one can find this grace in the recital of *mantra-s* of *sāma* and *rig vēda-s*.

The improvisation, inclusion and usage of *gamaka* may said to have attained greater credence with the advent of Thrimūrthi-s and their contributions. When carefully examined, it is noticed that each one of the *kriti-s* composed by these *vāggeyakāra-s* has the input of *gamaka* in varied measure. The feature is more pronounced in the compositions of Dikshithar and this is one of the reasons why his *kriti-s* have enhanced *rāga bhāva*.

There are several types of *gamaka-s*, the detailed description of which is not needed here.

Nēraval

Nēraval is yet another part of *manodharma sangīta*, which is not confined only to *pallavi* singing. It has a major role to play in the entire format of a classical concert. The methodology of singing, be it *rāga*, *thānam* and *pallavi* (RTP) or otherwise, is the same. It is extemporising a particular section of a song or the entire portion of a *pallavi* and portraying it in all colourful ways, so as to bring out the *rāga bhāva*, *rāga lakshana* and also *sāhitya bhāva* within the framework of the *tāla*, the piece is set to. It is therefore essential that the selected section of the song for *nēraval* should be judiciously done. The message conveyed therefore is very vital. *Bhāva* and *laya* are critical. Every *akshara* of the *sāhitya* has its place pegged in the cycle of the *tāla* and no liberty can be taken in derailing it. The artiste has the option however, to select any part of the song for *nēraval* as long as it is meaningful.

Structure and presentation

The *nēraval* has sections in its execution, the *vilambakāla nēraval* and the *drutakāla nēraval* (the slow and faster speed respectively). While the former is richly *bhāva* oriented, in the latter case greater importance is given to *laya*. At the commencement, the *nēraval* normally starts at the *tāyī* at which the original phrase in the *kriti* is set and later moves on to

the other octaves for elaboration in a systematic and organised way. The *vilambakāla nēraaval*, in particular, is always captivating because of the combined impact of the melody and *sāhitya*. An intelligent singer exploits such a situation in building and maintaining the tempo. The singer finally comes back to the *swara stāyi* and *swara sthāna* from where the exercise was taken up. This principle applies to *drutakāla nēraaval* also. The only difference is that in the latter case, the *laya* takes over in an impressive way introducing various rhythm patterns combining with the percussion movements. It should be emphasised that all *kriti-s* are not amenable for *nēraaval*. *Eduppu* or takeoff point is important in *nēraaval* exercises. It may be at *samam*, *atītam* or *anāgatam*. Unlike the *pallavi* in a normal *kriti*, in *shudha pallavi-s*, which are specially framed for *rāgam*, *thānam* and *pallavi*, there is greater academic interest.



Rāga Ālāpana

"Eloquence is hard to achieve in music"

Rāga ālāpana in Carnātic music is a function of creative or improvised (*manodharma*) melody as opposed to coined or fabricated (*kalpita*) music. *Ālāpana* is an abstract essay of a *rāga*. The word *ālāpa* means "spread" or "spread out" the *rāga*. The main idea of *ālāpana* is the delineation of a *rāga*. The next question evidently is what is a *rāga*? To put it in simple terms, a combination of *swara-s* in certain order of ascent (called *ārohana*) and descent (called *avarohana*) produces a *rāga*. It is not just haphazard combination of *swara-s*; there is some order in this combination. Essentially it must have some aesthetic and melodic content. Every such combination is intended to produce melody. The other important and inevitable criteria are, that there should be a minimum of five *swara-s* in *ārohana* and/or *avarohana*. In presenting out a phrase of *ālāpana*, the *swara-s* are not spelt out as such, but they are substituted by certain syllables like *ta dha ri ni* etc.

Alphabets, words, phrases and paragraphs

Just as there are alphabets, the combination of which form words, words into phrases and phrases to form sentences, and finally a paragraph, a *rāga* can be developed by the combination of *swara-s* (alphabets) to form short *sangati-s* (phrases) and combination of these *sangati-s* (sentences) and finally to present a paragraph (*rāga*). But these words and phrases and sentences of music have also to follow some grammar as in English language. It is not just a random combination of letters, which form a word. For instance, there must be an oval in a word, to give necessary intonation. Similarly, in a musical *sangati*, the presence of the *swara* (note) *sa* is inevitable, whatever be the *rāga*. Every word of a language conveys some meaning and similarly every musical phrase must mean something in terms of musical expression. Let us go a step further into the analogy of language. We may be speaking of a particular subject, say physics, and in physics, it may be nuclear physics. When we talk of this subject, we keep on framing sentences within the frame work of this subject only and take care to see that we do not mix up with, say, anatomy of human body. In the same way when we form *sangati-s* of a particular *rāga*, say *mōhana*, we do not mix it up with another *rāga*,

however close it is. Let us now take a concrete example of *rāga*, *mōhana*. It has a framework of *swara-s*, *sa ri ga pa dha sa* in the *ārohana* and *sa dha pa ga ri sa* in the *avarohana*. When we form phrases say, *ga ri sa dha sa ri ga*, and another *ga dha pa ga ri ga* and yet another *sa dha pa ga ri ga*, we see that these *sangati-s* are within the framework of the *rāga* and so make some sense. Thus, framing *sangati-s* or phrases in different octaves, starting from the lowest to the highest in a cogent way form a paragraph or an essay of *ālāpana*. The modalities and format of *ālāpana* will be discussed later. In combining these *swara-s*, there is yet another crucial gene, as it were, which contributes to the essence of melody in the phrases of the *ālāpana*. This is called the *anuswara* or the hybrid note. The main function of this *anuswara* is to bridge one note with the other, either in the ascending or in the descending order; like one taking over from the other as in a relay race, as for example, *dha^pa* or *ga^ri* in the same *rāga*. It is a smooth swing from one to the other without any break. This is called the *gamaka*.

Now that we have learnt the structure of the *ālāpana*, let us examine the sense and sensibility of this attempt. There are many *rāga-s* in Carnātic music, theoretically a minimum of 34,776, each having its own configuration, its defined *swara-s* and its framework, all accommodated within the 72 major *rāga-s* called *mēlakarta rāga-s* (Appendix -Two). The question obviously is, 'why is it that only a few *rāga-s* are popular?' The reason is simple. All *rāga-s* are not pleasant to the human ear. They cause some disturbance or unpleasantness. The phrases or *sangati-s* thus formed by the combination of *swara-s* in these *rāga-s* do not produce melody; they produce just the opposite. The unsavoury and bitter result is called *vivādi dōsha*. This apart, a large number of *rāga-s* resemble each other and they have to be eliminated. In this process the remaining prove aesthetically pleasing.

There is also a conventional way of singing the *ālāpana*; there is an idea and a purpose. That purpose is to delineate the *rāga bhāva* and spread the *swarūpa* (personality), paint the landscape of the *rāga* as it were, over a canvas. Thus if two artists paint this landscape, there will be two different pictures but yet pleasing, which depends upon the imagination or the creativity (*manodharma*) of the artiste.

The framework

The *swara* in a *rāga* are meant to be used and used according to their importance, in the mode of *a-kāra*, to heighten their spectrum (*swarūpa*). The tonic note or the *ādhāra shadja* of defined frequency in a melody is vital. This is the foundation over which the other *swara-s* built up with reference to *ādhāra shadja* in the *rāga* rest. Melody cannot survive without spelling out the note persistently. Whether spelt out significantly or not, the note is always there. Singing or playing *ālāpana* is based entirely on common sense in that the *ālāpana* of a *rāga* must cover as many octaves as possible (Appendix-One 'Sruti'). There are several technical terms used in describing various stages in the development of *ālāpana*. For now, we better avoid all that but follow what they mean. In principle it starts at the lower octave in perfect alignment with the *sruti* (drone) of the tonic note. The entire process of presentation of *ālāpana* consists in coining various *sangati-s* by combining various *swara-s* in as many ways as possible. Within the set of *swara-s* the *rāga* is made of, some play a major role and some less. The less important *swara-s* make a passing show as it were; this attitude is called *alpatva* as opposed to *bahutva*. There are also some *swara-s*, which dominate and stay persistently; they also form resting *swara-s* (called *nyāsaswara-s*) in the display of the *ālāpana*. Speed or *kālapramāna* is yet another important factor. The general procedure in practice is to start at a slow speed and gradually gain speed or combine different speeds in one expression. These are only theoretical concepts but in practice, a combination in right proportion of phrases in different speeds combined with nuances will form a good essay of *ālāpana*. Since *ālāpana* is a creative exercise, the art is based on the ideas the artist can generate. This is exactly the reason why the performance of a single artist varies in quality from concert to concert; so does the starting point in an *ālāpana*. There are however some *rāga-s* which have special impact if they are initiated at certain specific *swara-s*. For instance, a *rāga* like *atāna* generally commences at the higher octave with the combination of the *swara-s*, *sa ri sa nī sa dha dha*, or a *rāga* like *ānandabhairavi* in the middle octave with the *swara-s* *pa dha pa ma dha pa ma pa ma ga ri ga* or *rāga* like *rītigaula* with *swara-s* *ni dha ma ga ri ga*, or even the *rāga*, *śankarābharana* at the

lower octaves with the *swara-s*, *sa sa ri ga ma ga ga ma pa ma ga*. Many such examples can be illustrated. The idea essentially is to produce *rakti*. *Jīva swara-s* or the *swara-s*, which lends life as it were for the *rāga*, should be highlighted. They are, for example, *dhaivata* in *atāna*, *antara gāndhāra* in *kalyāni*, *madhyama* and *gāndhāra* in *hindōla*. In coining *sangati-s*, these *swara-s* are illuminated.

Certain *rāga-s* may have similar scales and melodic functions. But some exaggeration of what is referred to as *prayōga* (usage) makes all the difference. For instance, although the *swara-s* in the *rāga-s*, *śrī* and *manirangu* are similar, the difference lies in the way the *swara gāndhāra* is linked with the preceding *swara*. In the case of *śrī*, it goes with *rishabha* as *ri^ga*. And in the case of *manirangu* it is preceded by *madhyama* as *ma^ga*. Also the extension of the vowel linking *madhyama* with *gāndhāra* is significant. Similarly, the stress on the *swara*, *nishāda* in *rītigaula* is different from that in *ānandabhairavi*. Two *rāga-s* may have different scales, but have similar configuration of notes. The confusion commonly encountered between *pūrvikalyāni* and *pantuvarāli*; *darbār* and *nāyaki*; or *surati* and *kēdāragaula* are illustrative. It is nothing strange that several *rāga-s*, which have common parentage, have similarity. In such an event, in presenting the *ālāpana* of a particular *rāga* within that gambit, the subtle distinction must be brought out with needed command and skill to identify each. To do this the artist must have a thorough knowledge and power of execution of the framework of each *rāga*.

Ālāpana by past masters

Ariyakudi

It is in this connection that the styles of great masters and their *shārira* (voice culture) have to be taken into consideration. Let us take the case of maestro Ariyakudi. He is said to have set the trend for Carnātic music concerts, which is being followed to day. There are some special features in his presentation of *ālāpana*. To comment about his *shārira* (voice), it must be accepted that it was not steady although free flowing. However, it was rich, deep and broad at *ādhāra shadja*. There used to be some uncontrolled shake or quiver when he stayed at certain *swara-s*,

particularly in the lower octaves. But it used to be quite the opposite at the higher octaves and more so at *tāra shadja*, absolutely flawless and in perfect alignment with the *sruti*. He had the masterly control in modulation and improvisation of his voice and was aware of his strength. At the higher octaves it was fine, pleasant and melodious. He was a consummate craftsman and in his singing, he would give penetrating glimpses of eternity. His swift surprises would make one catch breath and set one's imagination aflame. Even more important feature of his *ālāpana* was brevity. The average time he would take for *ālāpana* was about five minutes, even if it meant a piece in *rāgam thānam* and *pallavi*. He had adopted a *madhyamakāla* format and had his own designs of choosing the commencing point (*graha swara*) for a *rāga*. For instance, it is *panchama* for *rāga-s*, *ānandabhairavi* and *pantuvārāli*; and *ādihāra shadja* for *rāga*, *śankarābharana*. He had his logical justification to do so. The *sangati-s* in his *ālāpana* were basically in innovative fragments impossible to be reproduced. Generally he would not stay for long at the lower octaves, but would jump to the middle or higher octave. After necessary but brief *vinyāsam* he would cover up the entire gamut of the *rāga* all over again in a fast tempo.

M.D. Rāmanāthan

Quite in contrast with Ariyakudi, Rāmanāthan had his own different format. As a slow singer he had remarkable depth in his voice and would put the ablest accompanying violinist to nullity. The leisurely pace and accompanying wisdom had an erudition, which could be explained as "common sense to uncommon degree". He would stay at the lower octaves longer and put wealth of his voice to the best use; it used to be immense and titanic. There was at the same time profound peace. The listener was given sufficient time to ruminate every *sangati*. He could delve in *drutakāla sanchāra* too, but it was always limited. His *ālāpana* sang music and poetry at one and the same time to dream about for the rest of our lives.

GNB

GNB was basically a very intelligent singer. It was he who clearly identified that each *rāga* deserves a treatment of its own depending upon

the merits of the *rāga vis-a-vis* the *kriti* that followed. In his research he found out how a rare *rāga* can be projected equally well in spite of its limitations. For instance, it was he who projected the image of the *rāga āndōlika* in its true perspective and qualified it as a *rāga* fit enough for elaboration in concert music. Compare it with what he does for *kalyāni*; it is an entirely different approach, more extensive and broad based and magnanimous. He was of the conviction that uniform norms cannot be applied. He weaved the *sangati-s* with countless shuttle. He looked back and forward at the same time, a swift binding strands here, another here, a sudden gathering up of a skill, a marvellous unravelling of it, with ceaseless flash. A man of rhetoric, all vivid and clear and invested with not an ounce more of energy than needed. For instance, the ocean of melodic wealth at *nishāda* in *tōdi* or *kalyāni* is something to be listening to and talked about. Think of any intricate exercise in *ālāpana* in any *rāga*; he used to do it with profound ease.

Learning the technique of ālāpana

Learning the technique of *ālāpana* is not workable in principle. But how does an artist resort to *ālāpana*? How are ideas generated? True, to a great extent, it is intuitive; it is a gift. Nevertheless, ideas in *ālāpana* and *sangati-s* in *ālāpana* are there for us to find out in the *kriti-s* themselves because, *kriti-s* are based on *rāga bhāva* and *rāga bhāva* in turn gives rise to *sangati-s* in *ālāpana*. Amongst the trinities, it is Dīkshitar who has impregnated or installed maximum *rāga bhāva* in his compositions. In the slow movement of his songs, it is even more evident. Careful observation reveals that if the lyric (*sāhitya*) in his songs are directly substituted with *a-kāra* (syllable *a*), it automatically reveals a *sangati* of the concerned *rāga*. Take for instance, the phrase, *vāsavādi sakaladēva*, in the *kriti*, *śrī subramanyāya namaste*. In this, the *rāga*, *kāmbhōji* is strikingly revealed. Similarly, phrases in songs, *chētah śrī* in *rāga dvijāvanti*, *kshitijāramanam* in *dēvagāndhāri* or the *navavārana kriti-s* are some good examples of such data. Thus a clear synopsis of the *rāga* emerges. With such beginnings and later on adding one's own imagination, the technique of singing *ālāpana* can be built up. A clear sense of *swara gnāna* and a good concept of *rāga* structure will go a long way in developing this skill. As already stated, the essential feature of

ālāpana is its aesthetics. Indian music is founded on the *bhāva* of the *rāga*. Classical music compositions are based on *rāga lakshana-s* (character and personality). As mentioned earlier, the word *ālāp* means spread. *Ālāpana* means to describe musically the complete personality of the *rāga* in all its details including *dashavida lakshana-s*, and *gamaka-s*, all in a captivating way. It also means usage of certain syllables, *ā, ī, o, vi, tha, dha, ri, na, thōm* and apply them to correct *swarasthāna-s* (frequencies) in extending the format of a *rāga*. In *ālāpana*, only some *rāga-s* yield themselves well for such elaboration, while some others do not. There are several stories going round that Tōdi Seetharāmaiah sang the *rāga* for eight days. There are some names of experts synonymous with the names of the *rāga-s*, like Atāna Appaiah, Śankarābharana Narasaiah, Bēgada Subramania Iyer, Bilahari Kempēgowda, etc.

Let us, for a moment analyse the *ārohana* and *avarohana* of the *rāga, mōhana*. The *rāga, mōhana* is formed by the *swara-s*, *shadja, chatusruti rishabha, antara gāndhāra, panchama, chatusruti dhaivata*; the *swara-s*, *madhyama* and *nishāda* are deleted. The *rāga* is a combination of five *swara-s* and therefore is an *audava rāga*; *ga* and *pa* are *amsa swara-s*, or resting notes. Now, in place of the *swara-s* in the order of ascent and descent, let us try to substitute the *a-kāra*, taking care to see that correct *swarasthāna* is maintained. In this trial, what is derived is a phrase or a *sangati* in the *ālāpana* of the *rāga, mōhana*. Let us go a step further and make a combination of the *swara-s* of the *rāga* in a zigzag way and yet retain the *a-kāra*; a new *sangati* of the *rāga* is derived in this process. To give a practical example, consider the *kriti, rājagōpālam bhajēham* of Dīkshitar in *mōhana*. The first *sangati* in the *pallavi* of the *kriti* runs with the notation thus: **sa sa pa, ga pa dha sa dha pa ga pa ga ri sa ri ga, ri ga pa**. If these are substituted with *a-kāra*, a *rakti sangati* of *mōhana* emerges. This is how *sangati-s* in the *ālāpana* of a *rāga* can be created. *Vilambakāla kriti-s* of Dīkshitar in particular are ideally suited for such initial exercises in the construction of *ālāpana* phrases. There are many more important elements, which when combined with the said notes enhances the aesthetics of the *ālāpana*. One of them is called the *anuswara*, which is a latent note between two *swara-s*. To illustrate this, consider the *swara, dhaivata* in *mōhana*. While singing this *swara* in

ālāpana, it is not held as a flat note. There is an oscillating movement or a swing, so to say, in the sense that this *swara* emanates from the lower frequency *swara pa* and moves in combination as *pa-dha*, where *pa* may be considered as *anuswara*. It is a sort of touch and go exercise. This is referred to as *jāru* (slide) and is classified as a type of *gamaka*.

The structure

In presenting the *ālāpana* of a *rāga*, the artiste is expected to follow some criterion, which are based on the components or segments in the structure of *ālāpana*. They are described in brief:

Ākshiptika will show up initially the entire personality of the *rāga* in a brief way, i.e., the *ālāpana* will start with the *ādhāra shadja* and brings out the *rāga lakshana* in the *mandara* (lower) and *madhyama* (middle) *stāyi-s* (octaves). In this movement, it should be possible for listeners to identify the *rāga*. In short, the *sanchāra-s* (movements) should contain specific phrases or combination of *swara-s*, which identify the *lakshana* of the *rāga*. The same procedure is adopted if the commencement of the *rāga* is at the *tāra shadja* or the higher octave and later moves down to the middle or the lower octave. Thus, *ākshiptika* can also be called the introduction to the *rāga*.

Rāgavardhani is the next stage in the elaboration of the *rāga ālāpana*. This is probably the most vital and widespread section of the *ālāpana*. In the *rāgavardhani* itself, there are four stages. The *ālāpana* starts with the *ādhāra shadja* and moves on to *mandara stāyi* decorated with attractive *gamaka-s*. It just touches the *tāra stāyi* and combines with *bahutva* (generous) movements. A good part of it consists of *vilamba* (slow) *sanchāra-s*. The second stage of *rāgavardhani* employs usage of more *rakti* and *ranjaka* movements and brings out the hidden melodies of the *rāga*. In this stage, the commencing and concluding *stāyi-s* are the same as the first, but the entire operation consists of more *madhyama stāyi sanchāra-s*. In the third stage, the development is confined to the *tāra stāyi sanchāra-s*. The final stage has mainly the *madhyama* and *drutakāla* (speedy *a-kāra* or *brigā*) movement.

Stāyi is the third *anga* where, within a limited sweep, as many *sangati-s* as possible in the *ālāpana* are envisaged. There are two

varieties in this concept, namely, the *ārohana stāyi* and the *avarohana stāyi*. In the former the feature follows the *ārohana krama*, i.e., commencing the *sanchāra* at *ādhāra shadja* and without touching the higher note, make combinations in the *madhyama stāyi* alone. This is also called *madhya stāyi shadja ālāpana*. Similarly one can visualise the *madhya stāyi rishabha ālāpana*.

Vardhani is the fourth and the final stage. *Vardhani* or *makarāni* is to sing the *ālāpana* in three speeds and finally end up at *ādhāra shadja*. Though the above is a theoretical analysis of the structure of *ālāpana*, much depends upon the variable factors amongst which, the most important is the quality of the timbre and its pliability. It varies from singer to singer and consequently, the fabric of *ālāpana* also changes accordingly. In conclusion it must be emphasised that the treatment given to *ālāpana* when it precedes the normal *kriti-s* is quite different from that which precedes a *rāgam*, *thānam* and *pallavi*.



Swarakalpana

"The purer the music, the less there is to be said about."

S*warakalpana* or *kalpanāswara* is yet another branch of *manodharma* (creative) *sangīta*. It is relatively less difficult than *ālāpana* in the sense that there are some guide factors readily available to carry out this musical operation. These guide factors are *swara-s* themselves. As long as the performer is well conversant with the *rāga*, i.e., the *swara-s* and their place in the corresponding scale, the exercise becomes that much easier. *Swarakalpana* exercise basically is the combination of *swara-s* of a particular *rāga* in all possible sequences within the ambit of the *rāga* both in *ārohana* and *avarohana*, and to set norms of grammar and aesthetics. To give an example, let us go back to the same analogy of the letters and words, where letters correspond to *swara-s*. Take for instance the word; 'correspond.' Many other words can be formed out of the letters in the word, like pond, respond, done, core, send, poor, spend, cone, door, etc. The only norm is that one should not borrow foreign letters; whatever is constructed must be meaningful. Even witty and attractive combinations can be made, say for example, from the word 'mother-in-law', one can arrive at a witty word, 'woman Hitler'.

Let's go a step further. Take a critical example like the *rāga*, *mōhana*. The cycle of the *rāga* is , ***sa ri ga pa dha sa , sa dha pa ga ri sa***. Within these limitations many combinations can be made – ***ga dha pa ga ri sa, ga pa dha ri sa dha pa, ga dha pa, pa sa dha, dha ri sa, etc.*** Such combinations can go on endlessly. The exciting and dramatic feature in these exercises is eloquence and fluency in making odd and yet, pleasing combinations, be it slow or fast speed. The *swara-s* so combined should be pleasing and artistic, both individually and collectively. *Swara-s* are relevant only in relation to each other. One must take over, as it were from the other, whatever be its place in the cycle (*mūrchanā*). In such an exercise of reaching much above or below the reference point in the cycle (called *dhātu swara-s*), the frequency or the *swarasthāna* must be strictly adhered to. Harmony and consonance must be maintained in such relationship. The skill of building up the relationship between *swara-s* and framing melodious phrases out of them is what matters in *swarakalpana*.

The tough portion in this process is due to the fact, that *eduppu* (commencing point) and the length of *swarakalpana* (half cycle or one cycle, etc.) put more constraints on the singer. In *ālāpana*, one can minimise the emphasis on lengthy *swara-s*, or chain the *sangati-s*. But in the case of faster *swarakalpana*, one has to live with it and innovate. Madurai Mani ushered in the art of creative patterning by the replacement of the *swara-s* by extending the vowel in its place and reducing the *swara* count.

Swarakalpana is an impressive feature in *manodharma sangīta*. It is always governed by the *tāla* of the corresponding *kriti*. It is to coin *swara-s* of a particular *rāga* at the selected part of the *kriti* and maintain coincidence with the starting point of the *sāhitya*. Here too, the *eduppu* has a crucial role. In this endeavour, it is spectacular to find the artiste making endless combinations of the *swara-s* creating unique melody and rhythm. In selecting the right place for *swarakalpana*, considerable imagination is needed. Some *kriti-s* like *chakkani rājamārgamu* or *śrī subramnyāya namaste* offer more than one place in the *kriti* for playing the *swara-s* in the *charana* alone. An intelligent singer uses all these places in succession and keeps changing the *swara graha-s*. In *swarakalpana*, the end *swara* should be in harmony with the commencing *swara* of the *sāhitya*, either the next lower or the next higher. The shrewd uses of the *vādi* and *samvādi swara-s* have a significant roll to play. In entirety, the combination of *swara-s* and *nadai-s* (rhythm patterns) add a majesty. Normally *swarakalpana* ends with what are called *tīrmānam-s*, *muktāyi* or *makutam*. This constitutes a group of *swara-s* set to different *nadai-s*, like *tisra*, *chatusra*, etc. or a combination, which repeats thrice. If they are far too extended, they turn out to be mind boggling; elegance should be maintained. Exercises in *swarakalpana* may be in two phases; slow and fast (double the first speed) but need not necessarily be so. It all depends upon the item chosen and the duration it lasts. The general trend however, is to play short but faster spells in the initial stages of the concert to build up the tempo and get more academic as the concert progresses. The ultimate effort is restricted to *rāgam*, *thānam* and *pallavi*. Within the set norms of

swarakalpana, there are significant but differing styles. This can be better understood by describing the styles of past masters.

Madurai Mani

The one maestro who has left lasting impressions as a great expert in singing *swarakalpana* is Madurai Mani. One of the highlights of his style is perfection and consistency, a marriage of refreshment to the mind, ear and spirit, an intensity which penetrates to all parts, always accurate balanced and natural. Name the *rāga*; he would go about with effortless eloquence. It is a stream of clear water fresh and cool. An artiste who was exceptionally careful about the *sruti*, his free flowing *swara-s* would pleasantly merge with the *tambūra* and *mridangam*, setting tune and identifying the difference between “living rhythm and dead time beating.” The loveliness and holiness lived on and on. There were no confusing calculations, no worked out phrases; it was all spontaneous and thrilling. It would, in turn send the accompanists to rapture of excitement. His work never grew old; it was beyond space and time.

Ariyakudi

On the contrary Ariyakudi had a provocative style. As in his *ālāpana* he was a lover of *madhyamakāla sanchāra-s*. Short phrases in innumerable varieties housed in calculated pulses of the section of a *tāla* and commencing at the same point every time clearly sent signals of the percussion expert about the pattern. In tune with this design, the expert, more often Palghat Mani Iyer, clearly knew the trick, like where to commence and when to be silent. He was known for the swift surprises that make one catch breath and set one’s imagination aflame; the interest is sustained. There are constant varieties of movements. It moves the heart, excites the nerves, arrests and engages the cutest intelligence. As in his *ālāpana*, brevity was his forte and in a short time he would present a glorious landscape. He too never indulged in calculated *koruvais*.

GNB

GNB, to put in few words, was an “aristocrat in intellect and democrat in sympathies” There was no looseness or scrappiness; on the contrary, there was opulence and gesture of greatness.

Semmangudi

There is no one to match him in his mastery. He can creep into any hazardous complexes of a rage and smilingly come out in flying colours. It all sounds so easy but one can dare attempt even the simplest of these riddles. *Rāga-s* like *dvijāvanti*, *rasikapriya*, *kuntalavarāli* to name a few, meekly surrenders before him revealing all their complexities and concealed colours. Again, it is all in the format of *sarwalaghu*, *swara-s* seldom extending with *koruvais* (vowels). Every detail is structurally whole. In a twinkling of an eye he changes earth into heaven, always most loveable, spontaneous, extravagant and fragrant.

M.D. Rāmanathan

There is no difficulty in understanding the style of MDR. He only asks for patience. It takes sometime to appreciate the marvels of his conception and the execution in his approach.



Rhythm in Carnatic music

*"Rhythm, melody and harmony are of ordering tones
so that they always interact and form relationship"*

To study rhythm is to study all of music. Rhythm both organises and is itself organised by all elements that create and shape musical processes. There is no life without sound; likewise rhythm has manifested itself in every field of nature, both in time and space. Every feature of activity and movement in Nature is governed by rhythm. The best example of rhythm is the heartbeat, which occurs exactly 72 times a minute. Thyāgarāja has used the words *swara*, *laya* in several of his compositions like *vara rāga laya*, *swara rāga sudhārasa*, *sogasugā mridanga tālamu*, *rāga sudhārasa*, etc., emphasising the importance of rhythm in the construction of *kriti-s* and related subjects. The romance of rhythm is striking in music, whichever system it belongs to.

It is said that man danced before he spoke. There is rhythm in this dance. There is time measure in human speech. Some people speak fast and some slow. It varies from person to person and is also based on emotions. In anger, it is one measure; in sorrow, it is another and in love it is yet another. Daily events like the running of a train, the barking of a dog, the sound of waves, all have rhythm built in them. The human instinct is to enjoy rhythm first and only later, music.

Our predecessors have framed several *ślokas*, which are set to rhythm and scale, the combination of which produces music. *Amarakōsa* is one such fine example, which perfectly fits into a time scale. Another good example is what children used to recite at home in the evenings in the past.

*Rāma Rāma jaya rāja Rāma
Rāma Rāma jaya Sīta Rāma
Shudhabrahma parāthpara Rāma
Kālathmaka paramēswara Rāma*

If a tribal group, untrained in art, begin to dance, there is spontaneous measure of time. Even more relevant example is the sound produced by a horse on the run. Irrespective of the speed it runs there is certain regularity of the beat. The beat may change with the change in the speed. Again between the beats one can identify a "time interval." Thus, three

fundamental features can be established in this example, the **beat**, the **interval** between the beats, and the **speed**. Music systems like pop, jazz and Indian film music induce the beat even more liberally, and however simple or complicated the music is.

To measure time, our grammarians and ancestors have found a means and that is called the *tāla*. Sound transformed into rhythm is called *tāla* in Carnātic music. In the above example of horse running, the **beat** can be referred to as *tāla*, the **time interval between beats** as *laya*, and the **speed** as *kālapramāna*. To be more precise, while *tāla* is musical time or unit of measurement, *laya* refers to the time measure. If *tāla* is a constant unit, it may be influenced by the *laya*, either way, in acceleration or retardation. *Tāla*, therefore, should not be mistaken for *laya*. For instance, we say that a *kṛiti* is set to a particular *tāla* and not for a particular *laya*; similarly we say that the artiste has good *laya gnāna* and not *tāla gnāna*.

The popular saying *śrutirmāta layah pitāha* means that *sruti* is the mother and *laya* is the father of music. The combination of both produces divine ecstasy. One cannot exist without the other, however rich each by itself may be. Intricate and innovative exercises in *tāla*, be it solo or in combination with a *kṛiti*, produce captivating impact and the listener is carried away by it. Playing complicated and innumerable rhythmic patterns over a percussion instrument like *mṛidangam* generates excitement, even in a layman. *Tāla* can best be defined as a means to measure or control a musical time cycle. It governs the rendition of a musical composition, dance or percussion solo.

The *tāla* system in Carnātic music is arduous to understand and elusive to follow. Sometimes, it is as intricate as it is baffling. There is considerable amount of grammar and mathematics in it. It is an indisputable fact that a good section of the general audience in a concert fails to follow the intricacies of *tāla*, much less understand the contribution of the percussion specialist. At best, most of the listeners follow the general rhythm and the cumulative effect of the teamwork. It is also commonly observed that when there is a solo percussion performance (*taniyāvartanam*), a good section of the audience either takes it as an intermission or may even decide to go home. It certainly is

not the mistake of the listener. The simple fact is he cannot follow what is played.

The concept of Tāla

In reckoning distance or time, a starting point is essential. If one says that the height of the hill is 3000 feet, it must have a reference point as to where it is measured, i.e., the ground level. Similarly, if it said that the cyclone is likely to strike in four hours, the question immediately rises as to which place it is going to strike. A dancer needs a stage to perform; one cannot dance in space. Likewise, a phrase of *tāla* can be stated in musical notation (*sollu*) as *thaka thari kita naka thathingina thōm*. But to accommodate this phrase a definite space in terms of time is necessary. The *sollu* referred to can be accommodated in any of the *tāla-s* in the Carnātic music system, without which it makes no sense. To understand this intricate subject, let us go from the known to the unknown. In keeping up the time measure in a Carnātic music concert, it is observed that the singer makes use of his fingers and palm. This directly helps in maintaining a constant time and time interval.

Just like the seven *swara-s* there are only seven *tāla-s*. The seven major groups of *tāla-s* are, *druva*, *matya*, *rūpaka*, *jampa*, *triputa*, *ata* and *ēka*. There are five varieties in each of this group. Thus we have a total of 35 *tāla-s*. The seven major *tāla-s* and their varieties are also reckoned in the mode of what is called *laghu* and *druta*, but the counts vary from *tāla* to *tāla*. The *sapta tāla-s*, their varieties and the number of *aksharas* or *aksharakāla-s* (counts) in each are represented in a table at the end of this chapter.

It is of interest to note that most of the composers have framed their songs in *ādi tāla*. The compositions in the rest of the *tāla-s* are comparatively less. Some of these compositions vary in speed; some move fast (*madhyamakāla*) and some, at a slower speed (*vilambakāla*). The speed with which it moves or progresses is called *kālapramāna*. The concept of *kālapramāna* can be seen in daily life. The nearest example is walking, which may be fast or slow. When it becomes very fast, it assumes the proportion of running. Similarly, in rendering songs, an optimum speed is set for each song. If it moves faster or slower than

intended, it loses its grace. If the composition moves at *madhyamakāla*, each *aksharakāla*, whether *laghu* or *druta*, is measured as single count, and is referred to as 1-*kalai*; if slower it is 2-*kalai* and is counted twice. As this movement is slowed down, the *aksharakāla*-s in turn are counted for longer duration; it may extend as long as 8 or 16-*kalai*. However, whatever the *kālapramāna*, it should be adhered to rigidly till the completion of the composition. A few examples of popular *kriti*-s in *ādi tāla* in different *kālapramānas* are listed below:

Madhyamakāla kriti-s

Vāthāpi ganapatim

Sītapati nāmanasuna

Manasulōni marmamulanu

Vilambakāla kriti-s

Kaddannavāriki kaddu

Entarani tanakenta pōni

Chakkani rājamārgamu

There is yet another important feature regarding the construction of *kriti*-s in relation to *tāla* and that is called the *eduppu* or the take off point of the *kriti*. Thus, the song may commence with the start of the *tāla* (or with the beat) when it is called *samam*; when it commences before the start of the *tāla*, it is called *atītam*; or in case the song commences after the *tāla*, it is called *anāgatam*. A few examples of the compositions of the three varieties are given below:

Samam

Elāvataramu

Marivērē

Atītam

Ambanannu

Ninnuvinagā

Anāgatam

Manasulōni

Kanakanaruchirā

The commencement of the *kriti* in *anāgatam* is of special interest. In such cases, the commencing point may be immediately after the first beat, reckoned as 1/4 unit, 1/2 unit or 3/4 unit, and called *kal-edam*, *are-edam* and *mukkal-edam* respectively. The *kriti*-s commencing in 3/4 *edam* are also called *dēśādi tālam*. A few examples of songs commencing in *dēśādi tālam* are listed below:

Manavinālagincha rādatē (nalinakānti)

Enta nērchina enta jūchina (shudha sāvēri)

Marugēlara ō rāghava (jayantaśrī)

Raghunāyaka nī pādayuga (hamsadvani)

Aparādhamulanu nōrvi (latāngi)

Śrī kānta nīyeda (bhavapriya)

Śrī raghukulamandu butti (hamsadvani)

Thrimūrthi-s and their contribution

Let us now study how the *Thrimūrthi-s* have used the *tāla* structure in framing their composition. The three *vāggeyakāra-s*, Shyāma Sāstry, Thyāgarāja and Muthuswāmi Dīkshitar, were born within a span of 13 years. The senior most, Shyāma Sāstry was born in 1762; five years later in 1767 Thyāgarāja was born and eight years thereafter, Dīkshitar was born. In the construction of their compositions, each had a unique and independent style. Prior to the advent of *Thrimūrthi-s*, the musical compositions were *sāhitya* oriented and music was secondary. The Trinities discovered both *laya* and *sāhitya* in music and utilised them to the full extent. While Thyāgarāja conveyed *sāhitya bhāva* in his compositions, Dīkshitar was expert in conveying *rāga bhāva*. Shyāma Sāstry was a wizard in *laya*. The *laya* patterns the *Thrimūrthi-s* used were essentially in *ādi 1-kalai* and *2-kalai*, *tisra triputa 1-kalai* and *2-kalai*, *miśra jampa*, *ādi tisra nadai* and *miśra chāpu*.

Thyāgarāja is known for composing different songs in different speeds (*kālapramāna*) in the same *rāga*. Here are a few examples. In the *rāga*, *shudha sāvēri* the *kriti*, *dārini telusukonti* is in *ādi tāla*. It has a unique structure in that, every *akshara* in the *sāhitya* coincides with the beat and the song as such, gives enormous scope for coining myriad *sangati-s* (varieties of musical theme developed step by step). These *sangati-s* form interesting and different patterns of *laya*. On the contrary, in the same *rāga*, he has composed a fast moving *kriti*, *kālaharanamēlarā* in a simple and pleasing way. In the *rāga*, *darbār*, the *kriti*, *mundu venuka* is dignified, slow and punctuated with enormous leisure (*visrānti*), while *yochanā kamlalōchana* in the same *rāga* is faster and thrilling in its movement. In *tōdi rāga*, the *kriti*, *dāsarathi nī runamu* moves slowly and the letters are evenly placed, whereas, the *kriti*, *kotinadulu dhanushkoti* in the same *rāga* has a different but attractive *kālapramāna*. In the *rāga*, *asāvēri*, the pace of the *kriti*, *lēkanā ninnu* is quite different from that of *māpāla velasi*. In contrary to the above, generally the *kriti-s* in *rāga*, *dēvagāndhāri* are distinctly slow as exemplified in the *kriti*, *kshīrasāgara śayana*. One of the rare examples where the *kālapramāna* is slightly faster, is in the *kriti*, *koluvai yunnade kōdandapāni*.

Thyāgarāja ingeniously combines the rhythmical and rhetorical accent at regular intervals in some of his compositions. Examine few *charana-s* in the *kriti*, *ēla nī dayarādu* in the *rāga atāna*:

Bālakanakamaya chēlasujana paripāla
Śrīramālōla vidruthaśarajāla śubhada
 Karunālavālagghananīlanavya vanamālikābharana / **ēla**
 Vārajalahi gambhīra dhanuja samhāra
 Dasharata sukumāra bhudajanavihāra
 Sakalāśrutisāra jalajamukha / **ēla**
Rājavandita pādabdanaka dīnarajakoti
 Samathējadhanuja gajarājanichaya
 Mrigarāja nādupai / **ēla**

Note the great accents highlighted above. They have a specific place, adding stress and impact, running in groups of eight *aksharakāla-s* each, at regular intervals. The letter **la** is dextrously woven, adding to the beauty of the *sāhitya* and *laya*. The *pallavi* has a slower pace compared to each of the *charana-s*. The contrast thus contributes to the excellent construction of the composition. It is so powerful because the *pallavi* in slower pace repeats each time the *charana* is over.

Dīkshitar's expertise in *tāla* structure is also unique. One of his scholarly contributions is the construction of *navagraha kriti-s*. It is not merely that in point of *rāga* delineation, the *kriti-s* range among the best of Dīkshitar, but even in point of their *tāla* build-up, they are unique as presenting a picture of *suladi sapta tāla-s*. A notable feature of these compositions is that the first seven *navagraha kriti-s* are set to seven *tāla-s* in that very order. They are tabulated in the following table.

Kriti	Rāga	Tāla	Planet
<i>Sūryamūrtē</i>	<i>Saurāshtra</i>	<i>Druva</i>	<i>Sūrya</i> (sun)
<i>Chandrambhaja</i>	<i>Asāvēri</i>	<i>Matya</i>	<i>Chandra</i> (moon)
<i>Angāraka</i>	<i>Surati</i>	<i>Rūpaka</i>	<i>Angāraka</i> (mars)
<i>Budhamāśrayami</i>	<i>Nātakuranji</i>	<i>Jampa</i>	<i>Budha</i> (mercury)
<i>Brihaspatē</i>	<i>Atāna</i>	<i>Tripata</i>	<i>Brihaspati</i> (jupiter)
<i>Śrī śukra</i>	<i>Pharaz</i>	<i>Ata</i>	<i>Śukra</i> (venus)
<i>Divākara</i>	<i>Yadukulakāmbhōji</i>	<i>Ēka</i>	<i>Śanaishara</i> (saturn)
<i>Smarāmyaham</i>	<i>Rāmapriya</i>	<i>Rūpaka</i>	<i>Rāhu</i> (dragon's head)
<i>Mahāsura</i>	<i>Chāmaram</i>	<i>Rūpaka</i>	<i>Kētu</i> (dragon's body)

The compositions of Dīkshitar, by and large, are *vilambakāla kriti-s*. This obviously gave him the scope to portray the *rāga bhāva*. He has also intelligently added in almost every song a passage in *madhyamakāla* along with *rāga mudra*. In the faster passages the *tāla* remains constant but the *sāhitya* is speeded up by doubling the *akshara-s* in a single *āvarta* of the *tāla*.

Shyāma Sāstry's name is synonymous with *miśra chāpu tāla*; he is the architect of that theme. None else has composed songs in that *tāla*, as intelligently and intricately as he has done. The *tāla* by itself adds dignity and weight to the overall structure of the concert. A concert without an item in *miśra chāpu tāla* sounds mundane. Apart from the impact of the *tāla*, the *eduppu* or the commencing point of the *kriti* in the *tāla* is often tricky. Take for instance the *kriti*, *nirnuvinagā mari dikkevaramma*. It is set to *dēśādi*, *miśra nadai* with *eduppu* in *vilōma* (*atīta*). Every *akshara* in the *sāhitya* is just beyond the beat. The conception of this *tāla*, by itself is intriguing; and to set impressive *sāhitya* to this is even more difficult.

Aridi (Arudi)

Aridi is a point of stress in the cycle of the *tāla*, a point where the lyric comes down with an impact. This point of stress is seen while rendering the composition, in the *pallavi*, *anupallavi* or *charana*. For example, in the *kriti*, *āragimpavē* in *tōḍi rāga*, at the conclusion of the word *āragimpavē*, there is a stress on the syllable *ve*, followed by the extension of the vowel. This feature is seen in almost all the great compositions and even in *varnam-s*. In every *varnam*, after stating the text in the *charana*, and before the following solfa syllables, this decoration is seen. Here are a few examples where *aridi* is significant:

Rājuvedala jūtamū rāre (stress on the letter 're')

Kamlāmbam bhajare (stress on the letter 're')

Palinchu kāmākshi (stress on the letter 'kshi')

In the following *kriti-s*, *aridi* falls on 7th *akshara* in each cycle of *tāla*:

Kaddannavāriki kadḍu (*tōḍi*),

Bālagōpala (*bhairavi*)

Kamlāmbam bhajare (*kalyāṇi*)

Śrī kānthimathim (*hēmaṇṭhi*)

In the following *kriti-s* set to *miśra jampa tāla*, the *aridi* falls on the 8th *akshara*:

Dāchukōvalēna (tōdi)

Budhamāśrayami (nātakuranji)

Munnurāvana (tōdi)

Dakshināmurthē (śankarābharana)

Aridi is also well seen on the last letter in the following phrases of *kriti-s*.

Madhurāpurinilayē (pūrvikalyāni)

Enta vēdukondu rāghava (saraswatimanōhari)

Yochanā kamalalōchana (darbār)

Nidhi chāla sukhamā (kalyāni)

Jēsinadēlla marachitivō (tōdi)

Sadāsivamupāsmahē (śankarābharana)



Classification of Tāla-s

"Over indulgence is a pleasure and not exactly noble"

While reviewing the classification of *tāla-s*, it is interesting to note that just like seven *swara-s* that give rise to innumerable *rāga-s*, there are only seven *tāla-s*, which form, as many as 175 workable *tāla-s*. The artiste's ability lies in creating several other combinations. The *sapta tāla-s* are *druva*, *matya*, *rūpaka*, *jampa*, *triputa*, *ata* and *ēka*. Learning *alankāra-s* is a guide to these seven basic *tāla-s*. Going further into the classification of each of these seven *tāla-s*, there are five varieties, or *jāti-s*, as they are called, resulting in a total of 35 *tāla-s*.

The 35 Tāla-s

The *tala jāti-s* are *tisra*, *chatusra*, *khanda*, *miśra* and *sankīrna*. The number of *aksharakāla-s* that each of these *tāla-s* have are – 3,4,5,7 and 9 respectively. It may be noted that there cannot be divisions or fractions like 6,8,10,14 or 18, because each is twice the number of respective *jāti-s*, in that order. This can be experimented with an example like *ādi tāla*. By and large, listeners know that *ādi tāla* has eight *akshara-s*. There is a mode of reckoning these *aksharas*. This *ādi tāla* is divided into two sections of equal number 4+4. The *pūrvāṅga* or the first half is measured in the mode of *laghu*, which consists of a beat, followed by three finger counts (constituting the four *akshara-s*). The second half of four *aksharas* in the *uttarāṅga* is measured in the mode of *druta*, which again consists of a beat, followed by the waving of the palm in the reverse fashion, a beat again followed by yet another waving of the hand in the reverse direction. Thus, the second half also makes up the four counts. Putting the two together, it will make one cycle (*āvarta*). It is necessary to clarify at this stage that *ādi tāla*, in fact, is a variety of *triputa tāla* and is designated as *chatusra jāti triputa tāla*. There are four other varieties in *triputa tāla* and they are *tisra*, *khanda*, *miśra* and *sankīrna*. Similarly the other six varieties of the major *tāla-s* have each five varieties. Thus, by multiplication, i.e., seven major groups of *tāla-s* with five varieties, we arrive at 35 major *tāla-s*. All the *tāla-s* are reckoned by as many counts respectively in the *laghu* mode of *tāla*, while the *druta* remains constant in each major *tāla*. To generalise what has been mentioned so far, every calculated clap or count of *tāla* corresponds to a unit of

musical time. It is relevant to mention here, that segments of *tāla* are in a sense, “time fields”, rather than objective units. The rhythm taps of the hand in myriad combinations lend to music, a set of pleasing patterns. The following table shows the *sapta tāla-s* and their varieties.

Sapta tāla-s and their 35 varieties

Tāla	Anga	Jāti	Name	Aksharakāla
Druva	O	Tisra	Mani	3+2+3+3 = 11
		Chatusra	Śrīkara	4+2+4+4 = 14
		Khanda	Pramāna	5+2+5+5 = 17
		Miśra	Pūrna	7+2+7+7 = 23
		Sankīrna	Bhuvana	9+2+9+9 = 29
Matya	O	Tisra	Sāra	3+2+3 = 8
		Chatusra	Sama	4+2+4 = 10
		Khanda	Udaya	5+2+5 = 12
		Miśra	Udhīma	7+2+7 = 16
		Sankīrna	Rāva	9+2+9 = 20
Rūpaka	O	Tisra	Chakra	2+3 = 5
		Chatusra	Patthi	2+4 = 6
		Khanda	Rāja	2+5 = 7
		Miśra	Kula	2+7 = 9
		Sankīrna	Bādhu	2+9 = 11
Jhampa	∪ O	Tisra	Kadamba	3+1+2 = 6
		Chatusra	Madhura	4+1+2 = 7
		Khanda	Chana	5+1+2 = 8
		Miśra	Sura	7+1+2 = 10
		Sankīrna	Kara	9+1+2 = 12
Triputa	O O	Tisra	Shankha	3+2+2=7
		Chatusra	Ādi	4+2+2=8
		Khanda	Dushkara	5+2+2=9
		Miśra	Līla	7+2+2=11
		Sankīrna	Bhōga	9+2+2=13
Ata	O O	Tisra	Gupta	3+3+2+2=10
		Chatusra	Lēkha	4+4+2+2=12
		Khanda	Vidhala	5+5+2+2=14
		Miśra	Lōya	7+7+2+2=18
		Sankīrna	Dhīra	9+9+2+2=22
Ēka		Tisra	Sudhā	3
		Chatusra	Māna	4
		Khanda	Rathi	5
		Miśra	Rāga	7
		Sankīrna	Vasu	9

The gati bhēda-s of the 175 tāla-s derived from 35 suladi tāla-s

Tāla	Jāti	Akshara	Tisra	Chatusra	Khanda	Miśra	Sankīrna
Druva	Tisra	11	33	44	55	77	99
	Chatusra	14	42	56	70	98	126
	Khanda	17	51	68	85	119	153
	Miśra	23	69	92	115	161	207
	Sankīrna	29	87	116	145	203	261
Matya	Tisra	8	24	32	40	56	72
	Chatusra	10	30	40	50	70	90
	Khanda	12	36	48	60	84	108
	Miśra	16	48	64	80	112	144
	Sankīrna	20	60	80	100	140	180
Rūpaka	Tisra	5	15	20	25	35	45
	Chatusra	6	18	24	30	42	54
	Khanda	7	21	28	35	49	63
	Miśra	9	27	36	45	63	81
	Sankīrna	11	33	44	55	77	99
Jhampa	Tisra	6	18	24	30	42	54
	Chatusra	7	21	28	35	49	63
	Khanda	8	24	32	40	56	72
	Miśra	10	30	40	50	70	90
	Sankīrna	12	36	48	60	84	108
Triputa	Tisra	7	21	28	35	49	63
	Chatusra	8	24	32	40	56	72
	Khanda	9	27	36	45	63	81
	Miśra	11	33	44	55	77	99
	Sankīrna	13	39	52	65	91	117
Ata	Tisra	10	30	40	50	70	90
	Chatusra	12	36	48	60	84	108
	Khanda	14	42	56	70	98	126
	Miśra	18	54	72	90	126	162
	Sankīrna	22	66	88	110	154	198
Ēka	Tisra	3	9	12	15	21	27
	Chatusra	4	12	16	20	28	36
	Khanda	5	15	20	25	35	45
	Miśra	7	21	28	35	49	63
	Sankīrna	9	27	36	45	63	81

Charts Ref: Prof. Sāmbamūrthy Synonyms: Triśra (Tisra), Chaturasra (Chatusra)

Legend (Sapta tāla chart): Anudrita ∪ Drita O Laghu |

Further, each of the *sapta tāla-s* gives rise to 25 varieties on account of *gati bēdha*. The resulting 175 varieties of *gati bhēda-s* are shown in the above table.



Rāgam, Thānam and Pallavi – The Touchstone of an Artiste

"Music is not alive till it is heard"

M*anodharma sangīta* (creative music) is the rich musical treasure in Cārnatic music. That, which is combined with an analysis of *lakshya* and *lakshana*, individual proficiency and at the same time pleasing to the listener, can be vaguely defined as *manodharma sangīta*. In no other system of music has creative music such great scope. The competence of the performing artiste is assessed in the feature of creative music, namely, *rāgam*, *thānam* and *pallavi* (RTP) that he presents as the main item in a concert. This is not all; it has in addition the artiste's virtuosity, the mastery in the science of *laya* and his ability to provide a glowing lustre to the art. *Rāgam*, *thānam* and *pallavi* is the touchstone of the artiste's proficiency. It is a major branch of *kalpavrikśa* of music.

The antiquity of pallavi

The word *pallavi* is not found in ancient music literature. As to who invented is not known. It must have evolved by itself. Though the word *pallavi* is used while referring to the first part of a *kriti*, the usage of the term as applied to RTP or *shudha pallavi* is different. Its structure and mode of presentation is diverse and manifold. *Shudha pallavi* consists of *sāhitya* specially contrived and designed for a particular *tāla*, where there is enormous scope for vast musical imagination. There is a reference that artists, one generation before the birth of *Thrimūrthi-s*, were proficient in rendering *shudha pallavi-s*. They were all under the patronage of kings of Tanjāvūr namely Thulāja, Prathāpasimha, Amarasimha and Sarabhōja. Thus, it can be said that *pallavi*, as a form of music, had its birth in Tanjāvūr dynasty around 18th century; some attribute it to 17th century.

Description of a pallavi

A *pallavi* has two sections (*anga-s*), the *pūrvānga* and the *uttarānga*. The point of division of these two sections, which also forms the point of stress, is what is called the *aridi*. The *aridi* is followed by the extension of the vowel of the preceding *sāhitya* for considerable time, called the *vishrānti* or resting interval. The *aridi* is also called the *padagarbha*. With the change in the *tāla*, the *padagarbha* also changes. It is the convention, but not a rule that the *padagarbha* should be accommodated

in the shortest section of the *pallavi*. In the *tāla-s*, *druva*, *matya*, *rūpaka*, *triputa* and *ata*, the *padagarbha* should fall on the first *druta*. In the *jampa tāla*, it is on the *anudruta*. In *ēka*, it may be at any point. There are two *arudi-s* in *retta (rettai) pallavi-s*, as the name indicates. In a *pallavi*, the *pūrvānga* and the *uttarānga* need not be of the same length in terms of time (*aksharakāla-s*); it depends upon the in-built *sāhitya*. The *graha* or *eduppu* (commencing point) may be at any count with reference to the first beat. *Pallavi-s* may be set to slow (*vilamba*) or faster tempo (*drutakāla*). Those *pallavi-s* that are set for *ativilambakāla* (very slow) need greater expertise to deal with. *Pallavi-s* are also set to 2-*kalai*, 4-*kalai* and even 8-*kalai*. In this context, it may be stated that, though there are as many as 35 basic *tāla-s*, all are not in use in *kriti-s*. Their use comes up only in the construction of intricate *pallavi-s*. Whatever be the variety of the *pallavi*, a *chatusra jāti pallavi* is ideal for singing in normal concerts. There are also short *pallavi-s* set to simple *rūpaka tāla*, but with intricate *nadai-s*. The artiste has to choose the right type depending upon the taste of the audience. To decide the *kālapramāna* of a *pallavi* is entirely the choice of the artiste. Though *pallavi-s* have a single *nadai* in the construction, it is the choice of the singer to introduce different *nadai-s*; some singers adopt one *nadai* to *pūrvānga* and another for *uttarānga*. The more complicated a *pallavi*, the more academic it becomes and the takers become less and less.

Methodology

Tāla is the foundation in a *pallavi*, a mandatory discipline, which prevents the artiste from taking any liberties with it. *Tāla* in a *pallavi* provides perfection to *gati* and *nadai*. Before taking up rendering of a *pallavi* in a concert, it is always advisable for the artiste to judge the likes and dislikes of the audience and also its relevancy. Otherwise, it turns out to be a futile exercise. *Rakti* (melody) cannot be separated from *vinyāsa* (analysis). The artiste also must take the accompanists into confidence. In short, the greatness of a *pallavi* lies on important factors like *padagarbha*, clarity of the *laya* in which it is composed, creativity in *nēraaval*, attractive and innovative exercises in *swarakalpana* and eventually the proportion of all these elements fused into one. It is rightly

said in a nutshell that *pallavi*, an acronym, means *padam*, *layam* and *vinyāsam*.

In rendering a *pallavi*, there are some methods or *kramas* to be followed, called *anulōma*, *vilōma* and *pratilōma kramas*. The meaning of these terms is explained in the following paragraph. The important point is that the *tāla* and its *pramāna* (ratio) must be kept constant. There is also a *krama* of starting the above three forms from the point of *padagarbha*. *Pratilōma* is also referred to as *āslaya vruddi krama* (the skill of *tāla* permutation). Whatever the *tāla*, the *pratilōma krama* can be initiated from the *samam*, but if the *eduppu* is after 1/4, 1/2 or 3/4 *aksharas*, the *pratilōma krama* must necessarily start from that point.

Sub-divisions

Let us now examine the meaning of the terms, *anulōma*, *vilōma* and *pratilōma* that constitutes a *pallavi*. If the original *dhātu* and *mātu* are rendered in the first, second and third speed (*trikāla*) in that order, it is called *anulōma krama*. In this exercise, the *tāla* remains constant, but only the *sāhitya* moves in different speeds. If this order is reversed and played in third, second and first speed, it is called *krama vilōma*; in the reverse order, the speed of the *tāla* remains constant. On the other hand, if the *sāhitya* moves at a constant speed and the *tāla* changes to first, second and third speed in that order, the *krama* is called *pratilōma*. In this context, the *kālapramāna* of the *pallavi* and the time measure of the *tāla* are different from each other and yet maintain a relationship. In this method, the *aksharakāla* becomes the third speed. In the present day concerts however, only *anulōma krama* is followed in rendering *pallavi*. Also, the *trikāla* exercises start from the *eduppu* itself, so much so, the *padagarbha* rests at different *anga-s*. When the *pallavi* commences in the *madhyamakāla* and while doing the *trikāla sanchāra* the time measure to start with is, the first speed followed by second and third speed. It is common practice to include the *tisra nadai* (accommodating the *sāhitya* three times) only after the second speed, and later on move to the third speed. The rendering of the *pallavi* is followed by the percussion expert on the *mridangam*. He has to pick up the *pallavi* structure and play the *trikāla* including the *tisram*, which perhaps, he has not listened to, before. This calls for dexterity on the part of the

mridangam player. The rendering of a *pallavi*, therefore, is entirely a *manodharma* exercise and its scope is enormous. If a *pallavi* is rendered as per the established norms, it takes a minimum of one hour to complete the item.

Thānam (Tāna) - Definition

Thānam is a stimulating and exhilarating experience in the feature of *rāgam*, *thānam* and *pallavi* (RTP). *Thānam* is an adjunct of *rāga ālāpana* and is referred to as *madhyamakāla ālāpana*. If *ālāpana* in the general sense has melody as the prime factor, *thānam* has both melody and *rhythm*, but each has its own individuality. In rendering *thānam*, the singer has to exercise his own creativity. To draw out a spectrum and promulgate *swara-s* of a particular *rāga* in an established and conventional symmetry or pattern may be defined as *thānam*, also called *kataka*.

Combining groups of *swara*, either in straight (*pūrna* or *sampūrna*), or crooked (*vakra sanchāra*) is the art of singing *thānam*. If the combination consists of *sampūrna swara-s*, it is called *sampūrna thānam*. If they are in groups of 6,5,4,3 and 2 *swara-s*, it is referred to as *asampūrna thānam*. If it involves *vakra sanchāra*, it is called *kuta thānam*. There are many such varieties.

Methodology

Thānam may be rendered in various speeds. It may be *ativilamba* (very slow), *vilamba* (slow), *madhyama* (average), *druta* (fast) and *atidruta* (very fast). The method of singing *thānam* has undergone changes over a period of time. In the past, *ghana rāga-s* had a major role, in the sense, the singer used to sing the *thānam* first in *ghana rāga-s* and then only take up the schedule *rāga*; it could also be the reverse way. In singing the *thānam*, the word *ananta* is used, but in doing so, it generally takes some distortions and syllables like *tha*, *thō*, *thōm*, *nam*, *ananta*, etc. are used.

There are two ways of singing the *thānam*. The first way is to commence at *ādhāra shadja* in a smooth tempo in *madhyamakāla* and move around *jīva swara-s*. The second method is to sing in *tristāyis* (three octaves) in *trikālas* (three speeds). In these combinations, the

artiste is expected to adopt the different *gatis*, like *tisra to sankīrna*. These effects can be vividly observed while playing *thānam* on the *vīna*. Percussion can accompany *thānam* playing, whether vocal or instrumental.

The item *rāgam*, *thānam* and *pallavi* although a major one is yet one of the decorative features that make a concert successful. It should not be considered as an end in itself. Even more importantly, the three components must be squarely balanced not only within itself but also in the concept of the performance.



Music becomes visual in dance

"Music excels life, enhances life and gives it meaning"

We have been discussing about Carnātic music, its content, grammar, its academic and innovative forms and its presentation. Classical music occupies an important place in Indian dance (*nāṭya*), whatever style of dance it is. In such a situation, music becomes visual, as it were. Though basics of music for concert and dance are the same, the status for each is different. In a concert, the musician occupies the centre stage; in dance he is sent to the wings, and more often not seen at all. But without music, dance is lifeless and has no meaning. There is relatively less *manodharma* music in dance; it is essentially *kalpita sangīta* (worked out music). In dance, the dancer is primary and the singer is secondary. The singer need not be as perfect as a concert musician needs. Mistakes if any, go unnoticed all because the attention of the audience is on the dancer. What the singer need possess is a good voice to bring out the dramatic visual effect. In brief, the text is translated to action and through that media, the message is conveyed, the story is narrated, the incident described and the feeling expressed.

Dance music is essentially orchestral. It includes the singer, percussion (without fail), along with more than one instrument, say, violin, flute, veena, clarinet, etc. The *nattuvānar*, who conducts the *nāṭya*, is more important in orchestra because he/she has choreographed the dance feature. Depending upon the theme, the style and creativity, the music also varies; so also the contribution of the orchestral music. For instance, if it is *kodiyāttam*, percussion dominates and melody part is less. If it is *bharatanāṭya*, the musical and the orchestral settings are quite different. If the *nāṭya* is richly *abhinaya* oriented, it is dominated by vocal music and percussion goes to the background, unless interspersed with long *jatis* specially framed for the piece. In *odissi*, harmonium has an important role to contribute to music. In dance dramas like *kuchipudi*, the story is narrated in musical form, a sort of musical prose order. Also *kuchipudi* solo has come into vogue. In order to identify different forms of dance music, we should try to know something about dance itself.

Though every country has its own art forms of dance, in India it is perhaps the most ancient. Volumes have been written about Indian dance

dating back to two thousand years. Cabaret, café dance and ballroom dance were unheard of till recently in India. In recent decades, with the infiltration and admixture of different cultures classical dance has taken a beating; the art form is adulterated. In the past, Indian classical dance was never an entertainment; it was only a means to a sense of elevation salvation, like classical music.

Indian dance has three established forms, *bharatanātya*, *kathakali* and *kathak*. There are also new forms like *manipuri*, *kuchipudi*, *odissi*, *āndhranātya*, etc. The oldest of these is *bharatanātya*, which forms the nucleus for the other forms. Dance dramas (*nritya nāṭaka-s*), *yaksha gāna*, *kuravanji nāṭaka-s*, *gēya kavya-s*, *gēya charitra-s* are other offshoots. Each of these forms has its own individual style of music. Carnātic music has an important role, particularly in *bharatanātya*.

Just as a music concert has an established sequence (*paddhati*), *bharatanātya* performance too has its sequence. Each item in the sequence has its place and time. They are so well arranged that in case of solo dance, which more often it is, if one item is physically taxing, the following item would be slow and would provide sufficient rest to the dancer, while still performing. Thus the change from one over to the other, not only provides balance of performance, but also builds up continuity. The music that goes with *bharatanātya* is explained below in its sequence:

Allaripu corresponds to a near *tānavarnam* of concert music. It is a warming up rhythm exercise that includes *tisram*, *chatusram* and other *nadai-s*.

Jatiswaram again is a rhythmic item set to solfa syllables, but devoid of *sāhitya* (lyric). There are no *anga-s* like *pallavi*, *anupallavi* or *charana*.

Shabdham is played to a composition; it has *sāhitya*, which is conveyed to the audience through gestures. It has both *nritya* and *abhinaya*. It was the old custom to sing *shabdham* in high octave and in the *rāga*, *kāmbhōji* set to *chāpu tāla*, which would build up the needed impact. In the past, *shabdham* used to be the salutation to the king before whom the dance was performed.

Varnam and *padavarnam* in its form are the same as depicted in a concert. It is the item in dance, which perhaps is most tiresome. It needs fast movements and the *chittaswara-s* that follow need expert and precise footwork. The *padavarnam* involves little more of *abhinaya* although the pace is more or less the same. In dance, it is the *padavarnam*, which is more current.

Padam-s are one of the two wings of musical forms confined to *śringāra sāhitya* (lyrics). The other musical form is *jāvali*. The ancient reference to *padam-s* was essentially devotional music, like the *devaranāma-s* of Purandaradāsa as also the Tamil *padam-s* of Muthu Tāndavar. In the contemporary period, both *padam-s* and *Jāvali-s* are synonymous with dance music. According to Kapil Vātsāyana, “the *padam* is a musical piece, which belongs specially to the sphere of dance music even though the term is often used to signify any type of devotional composition. The musical composition is created with the dancer in the mind and its themes treat mostly of *nāyaki* and *nāyaka* of literature. The *bhakti* school of poetry found its finest expression in the *padam-s* composed mainly during the medieval period and the subtlest shades of *śringāra rasa* are manifested in these compositions. The music determines the nature of *sanchāri bhāva*, which the dancer depicts in endless ways and the chastity of the *abhinaya* technique at its best is seen in the execution of the *padam*. The greater the artiste, the subtler the shades of *sanchāri bhāva*, he or she can present. The melody and rhythm are so exquisite that they have made inroads into the realms of Carnātic music concerts and have contributed so much of lustre that without these two items, today’s concert remains incomplete”. *Padam* is the most innovative section of dancer where *abhinaya* predominates, where there is plenty of scope for introducing the *bhāva*. The *padam* moves very slowly and provides enough opportunity for the interpretation of dance movements. The music in *padam* has a special significance. A particular phrase conveying the feeling is repeated over and over again (*sanchāri*), and during each such repetition, the dancer, in turn gives a different interpretation. In this context, the musical aspect becomes mundane, because it is the same *sangati* repeated, sometimes a dozen times, with not much of addition or alteration. The attention of the audience

however, is not on the music, but rests with the dancer. The boredom of music under the circumstances does not set in.

Padam-s are stately and dignified. It is more often a monologue. To understand the meaning of *padam* and the musical aspect built within it, one should be conversant with the role of *nāyaka* (lover) and *nāyaki* (loved). It is *bhakti śringāra*; in the situation, the two become a meaningful entity. There are some *padam-s*, which are erotic in content and are referred as *pachchi śringāram*, but they are richly musical. To attribute base values to such compositions is wrong. It is all spiritual love. Some *padam-s* also have satire and *hāsyā* (humour) built in. As for as structure is concerned, a *padam* resembles a *kriti*; it has all the *anga-s*, like *pallavi*, *anupallavi* and *charana*. But the style in rendering is different in the sense that the feeling must be truly conveyed. It therefore needs special talent to sing *padam-s* effectively. *Padam-s*, which were essentially *nāṭya sangīta*, made inroads into the concert platform and has remained an integral part of the performance today.

Three names stand out as the greatest composers of *padam-s*. The earliest was Jayadēva, and later Nārāyana Thīrtha and much later Kshēthrayya (Kshēthragna). Other great composers include Dharmapuri Subbarāyar, Venkatagirivāru, Muthunatēswar, and Gōvindaswāmi. While the Telugu composers had Krishna as their lord, Tamil *vāggeyakāra-s* had Subramanya in his place. Among these, Kshēthrayya is perhaps the greatest. The choice of words, the *rasa* that is conveyed and the *kālapramāna*, not to mention the *rāga bhāva* is all unique in his compositions. Kshēthrayya has Muvvagōpla as his *mudra* (signature) in his compositions. Besides those mentioned, the other composers of *padam-s* are – Sārangapāni with Venugōpāla as his *mudra*, Mūvanallūr Sabhāpathi with Rājagōpāla as his *mudra*, Ghanam Sinnayya with Mannāruranga as his *mudra*, Vaidīswaran Kōil Subramanyayyar with Muthukumāra as his *mudra* and Kavi Kunjara Bhārathi with Kavi Kunjaram as his *mudra*.

Jāvali-s in contrast to *padam-s*, are more physical and more romantic in the lyric. While it is almost mandatory that a *padam* should move at a slow speed, *jāvali-s* are set to *madhyamakāla*. Unlike *padam-s*, *jāvali-s* can accommodate different *sangati-s*. There are certain special *rāga-s*

that are chosen to compose the *jāvali-s* like, *kāpi*, *pharaz*, *kamās*, *bēhāg*, *surati*, *hamīrkalyāni*, etc. *Jāvali-s* set to *miśra chāpu* and *khanda chāpu tāla-s* are more impressive. In *jāvali-s* there is no place for *chittaswara-s* (solfa syllables). In construction, they resemble a *kriti*. They have also a special place in a concert; they come up generally at the concluding part of the concert. Great composers of *jāvali-s* are Swāti Tirunal, Chandrasēkhara Sāstry of Bangalore, Bellāry Rāja Rāo, Patnam Subramania Iyer, Shivarāmaiah, Vidyāla Nārāyanaswāmy, Rāmnād Śrīnivāsa Iyengār, Mysore Venkatagiriappa, etc.

Tillāna: “*Ti-lā-nā* is a joyous fantasy of pure *nritta*; intricate footwork and rhythmic movements blend to give an aesthetic symphony of speed, stability and line. The exquisite cadence of music and flexion’s of neck, shoulder and waist are contrasted with sculpture postures essentially feminine and yield to brilliant summary of dance artistry.” (Tanjāvūr Nrityālaya brochure). Dr. Kapil Vātsāsyana says, “The *tillāna* is a musical composition of mnemonics sung in a particular mode (*rāga*), set to a particular metrical style.” *Tillāna*, as adopted for a concert, has a slight change in construction. There is a greater *bhāva*, decorated *sangati-s* and a thrilling rhythmic melody. In a dance, there is greater scope for footwork providing full opportunity for the percussion syllables. Generally a *tillāna* is the penultimate item in concert music. *Tharana* is the equivalent term for *tillāna* in Hindustani music.

Some good composers of *tillāna* are – Mysore Sadāsiva Rāo, Pallavi Sēshaiyer, Patnam Subramania Iyer and Rāmnād Śrīnivāsa Iyengār. Contemporary *vidwāns* Mangalampalli Bālamuralikrishna, Madurai Kriśhnan also have come out with few good *tillāna-s*.

Swarajati and **Jatiswaram** are the other two forms of dance music, which have entered the concert platform. The first lesson in learning music is *swarajati*. It has a series of pleasing melodies in several *charana-s* brought out by the *rakti* combinations of solfa syllables and corresponding *sāhitya*. Another form in vogue in *bharatanātya* is a *padavarnam* interspersed with *jatis*. This form of music helps the students to understand the *swarasthāna-s*. It was Shyāma Sāstry who gave musical form to *swarajati*. His *swarajati-s* set to *tōdi*, *bhairavi*, *yadukulakāmbhōji* are outstanding examples. Extending the term a little

further, the five *ghana rāga pancharatnas* can be grouped under *swarajati-s* in terms of grammar. *Jatiswara*, as the name indicates, is not much different from *swarajati*, except that it has no *sāhitya*; it has interesting *jati-s* built into it.

Ślōkam, Viruttam, and Padyam: Narrating a *ślōkam* or *padyam* in a concert is like involving in transcendental meditation. It induces spiritual relaxation. Music has secondary importance when rendered as part of dance or dance drama because there is no rhythm; it is pure *abhinaya*. In a music concert a *viruttam* is rendered in several *rāga-s* like a *rāgamālika*. In doing that, care should be taken that the text is not distorted. Selection of the text and the *rāga-s* are important.

Ashtapadi-s, tēvāram-s, daru-s and devaranāma-s are all musical forms common to both dance and stage music. For purposes of dance, they need excellent choreography, while it needs profound *bhakti* if the form has to be primarily musical. All these items are generally tail enders in a concert.



Other forms of music

"Making music is an activity rooted in the body"

One of the fundamental forms of musical exercise is *alankāra*. For a performing musician, however great, practising *alankāra* with *a-kāra* is a good exercise and is a form of voice culture. *Alankāra* is the first exercise, which the student is put through, which helps in gaining both the *swara* and *laya gnāna*. Purandaradāsa had the foresight to compose *alankāra-s* in all the *tāla-s* with simple text and minimum grammar. Mastering the *alankāra-s* lead the student to the next advanced stage of learning the *varnam*.

Another important group is the folk music, which in fact, is older than classical music. Folk music is characterised by its universality. It is a form of music, which can make everyone, get together. Every nation, including tribes has its own style of folk music. The composers of folk music are unknown and such music is referred to as *anādi sampradāya*; and there is no *lakshana* in it. In his *divyanāma sankīrtana-s* and *utsava sampradāya kīrtana-s*, Thyāgarāja immortalised folk music raising it to the level of an art in his operas. Folk songs have no musical norms to follow. It is an easy and pleasant type of entertainment, easy to learn and easy to sing.

Rāgamālīka and Tālamālīka

If a *kṛiti* is considered as made of one type of flower, a *rāgamālīka* can be considered as a garland made of several types of flowers, all beautiful and attractive. As the word indicates, *mālīka* is a garland and *rāgamālīka* is a garland of *rāga-s*. *Rāgamālīka* is one of the most enjoyable forms of music in melodic system and the interest is stimulating while it is being rendered, because there is change in mode from one to the other. *Rāgamālīka-s* have highly decorative patterns in artistic form in their construction. It is particularly interesting for a section of audience who has a thrill in identifying *rāga-s* that come one after the other.

Rāgamālīka-s are of different type and probably the longest compositions in Carnātic music, barring a few short ones. These can be in any form like *varnam*, *kṛiti*, *pallavi*, *ślōkam*, etc. For instance, most of the music lovers are conversant with the *navarāgamālīka varnam*; also

Taniyāvartanam (Tani)

"The world is made by the singer for the dreamer"

Percussion instrument has a special role to play in Carnātic music. In a concert, there is a place and time when it takes over an independent role as a solo part of playing. This role is called *taniyāvartanam (tani-āvartam)*.

The sampradāya (convention)

In the past, in a concert of long duration such opportunities for solo playing used to be two or even three occasions. They were not pre-planned or pre-conceived; it was pure *manodharma*. When the artists were in mood and when it became unbridled, it was given a go. If not more, there used to be at least two occasions, one at the time of rendering a *rāgam*, *thānam* and *pallavi* sequence, and another unspecified but at an appropriate time. With the change in the concert pattern, the solo opportunity for *mridangam* or other percussion as a team has become more a ritual and sometimes even deleted altogether. The great tragedy today is that when this dynamic display starts, a good number of listeners take it as an intermission and may even go home.

Taniyāvartanam or *tani* as the language indicates, is derived probably from the *tamil sampradāya* (convention). As is evident, it is a combination of two words, *tani* meaning separate or solo and *āvartanam* meaning circle or completion of a cycle. In short, it means playing independently. In this context we have to recall that about a century ago, there was only *bhajana sampradāya* in vogue and later on came the concert format. Even though it was *bhajana sampradāya*, or group singing, *mridangam* remained an accompanying instrument, with perhaps less sophistication. Later when the *kīrtana-s* were replaced by *kṛiti-s*, and with the parameters of construction in a composition, the status of percussion gained greater importance.

A story goes as to how the *mridangam* gained a *tani* (independent) status. It is said that decades ago, a great *vidwān* by name Nārāyana Puzha would sing and also play the *mridangam* at the same time. At the right moment, he would introduce an attractive *tīrmānam*. Listeners for the first time realised the aesthetics of the instrument and requested

Nārāyana Puzha to play the *mridangam* independently; this is how it is said to have taken an independent birth. Later, great *vidwan-s* in percussion, Azhaganambi Pillai, Dakshināmūrthy Pillai, etc. came into the field. One of the greatest exponents of *mridangam* of the period was Azhaganambi Pillai. He was popular for his *sarwalaghu* style of playing and the respect he commanded was such that the main artiste would allow him first to get on to the stage. Dakshinamurthy was yet another great percussion expert. However, it is Palghat Mani Iyer's *sampradāya*, which is being followed today.

Methodology

In a regular concert, before the *taniyāvartanam* is introduced, the main artiste would have dwelt at length the preceding piece, packed with best of *manodharma* and would have created a tempo. More often it would be in a major *rāga* like, *tōdi*, *kalyāni*, *śankarābharana*, *bhairavi*, etc. The *kālapramāna*, which he would have maintained, is crucial. The mood is equally important. On his part, the *mridangam* player has also to maintain the same tempo, mood, etc.

Well, how does he go about it? First he has to establish the correct *kālapramāna*. He will do it by his initial playing. It is more often true that the main artiste would have built up a racing *kālapramāna* in his enthusiasm and emotion. It is therefore necessary that the percussion expert goes back to the correct *pramāna*. Later he has to carefully note the *eduppu* and fix it up. With these two norms established, he starts in a simple way and makes unsophisticated and conventional combinations, going gradually to more and more intricate calculations with variation in speed, all the time keeping the *tāla* and *pramāna* constant. He then goes into well worked out *koruvai-s* (mathematical divisions and subdivisions) and after playing them three times each, comes back at the point of *eduppu*. There are many such *koruvai-s* for each *tāla* and many more can be improvised on the spot.

In this exercise, he judiciously penetrates into the different *jati-s* and *nadai-s* (refer to earlier chapters). He may even mix up different *nadai-s* in one *āvarta*. The change over from one *nadai* to another within the framework of the *tāla* is a highly imaginative exercise. If he is an expert,

he may even display different *nadai-s* independently in either hand, all the time keeping up the pleasant *nāda* and building up the sanctity of the episode. Thus the cycle is completed each time. In these variations, the change over or transition from one *nadai* to another should not be made obvious. The strokes that show up the *sruti* must be maintained constantly.

In the next phase, these intricate combinations and calculations give place to what is called *sarwalaghu*. *Sarwalaghu* is *laghu* all through, measuring time in even numbers, reckoning time as *akshara-s* instead of reckoning through *anga-s*. The contrast that comes out in a situation like this is even more exciting. The percussion then moves on to what is called *mohara*. This again is a worked out combination for different *tāla-s*, which gives an inkling that the *taniyāvartanam* is soon coming to a conclusion.

The final part is *tīrmānam*, which again is a creative exercise. The artiste uses different *yati-s* like *gopuccha*, *śrōthōvaha*, *sama*, *daru*, *vishamayi*, *mridangam*, etc. The *tīrmānam* may be based on any of the above or combination thereof. Each has its own dynamism. *Vishamayi*, as the name indicates, is perhaps the most intricate and needs great concentration to play as well as listen. In this *yati*, the beat of the *tāla* does not coincide with the beat of the *akshara*. Finally, the *tīrmānam* is completed with perfection and the end culminates with the *eduppu*. It is indeed very difficult to keep up the time measure for an expert percussion player. At the end of the *tīrmānam*, the main artiste picks up the phrase where he had left.

Taniyāvartanam is also common in *tavil*, which accompanies *nāgaswaram* as a substitute to *mridangam*. Since the concerts of *nāgaswaram* go on for long duration, sometimes all night long, the *tani* has to be naturally long ranging 30 to 60 minutes. Though the principle of playing *tani* on *tavil* is the same, the modalities and methodology is different. Some *yati-s* like *vishamayi* are highlighted.



The format of a concert

"Vocalists are only human, and therefore are limited in their lungpower"

Earlier in the book while dealing with *varṇam*, a reference was made to the *kachchēri dharmā*, the *sampradāya* that is followed in a concert, as well as the importance of starting the concert with a *varṇam*.

The *varṇam* may or may not be followed by *swarakalpana*. But a *padavarṇam* should, in principle be devoid of *swarakalpana*. The choice of the *varṇam* is matter to be considered. Important and long concerts should preferably start with an *ata tāla varṇam* and should be rendered in two speeds. A simple *ādi tāla varṇam* will suffice for a short concert. To choose a familiar *varṇam* is always better because the teamwork will be more effective. If it is an uncommon *varṇam* in an unfamiliar *rāga* set to complicated *tāla*, the audience will loose the interest and the accompanists will be at bay. It is always advisable to discuss with the accompanists what items the artiste is likely to sing.

The first few songs should contribute to build up the tempo. A competent artiste will be able to do it in the *varṇam* itself. There are two ways as to how to go about with the rest of the concert. Generally the artiste would have worked out the items that should follow; but, if one should go by one's own *manodharma*, the way is different. At the conclusion of a particular item, an experienced and mature artiste has an intuition as to what should be the next item in terms of *rāga*, *tāla*, *vāggeyakāra*, etc. It will generally be richly contrast both in content and in form. To take up such an item at the spur of the moment and do justice calls for enormous experience, courage and confidence. It also requires rich repertoire. In any case, the two or three items that follow are generally *madhyamakāla kriti-s* in *rāga-s* like, *saurāshtra*, *nāta*, *harikāmbhōji*, *ārabhi*, *shudha sāvēri*, *pantavarāli*, *pūrvikalyāni*, *latāngi*, *māyāmālavagaula*, *ārabhi*, *bēgada*, etc., set to *ādi* or *rūpaka tāla*. *Nēraaval*, at this stage should be limited. If *swarakalpana* is attempted, it should be in *madhyamakāla* and the *eduppu* should be catchy. The succession of the *rāga-s* should be in contrast, like a *prati madhyama rāga* followed by a *shudha madhyama rāga*. Constant vigil should be kept on the *sruti* of the *tambūra* and on its alignment. It is generally found that it takes about 20 to 30 minutes to settle down comfortably in

all these parameters; by then the concert would have reached an elevated stage. Then follows the second stage of the concert. An item set to *miśra chāpu tāla* moving in a slow or medium speed should get into the sequence; it will energise the concert. *Rāga-s* like *ānandabhairavi*, *rītigaula*, *sāvēri*, *malayamāruta*, *śrīranjani* and such *rakti rāga-s* will contribute to the elevation of the status of the concert. At this stage, the concert should be supported with more and more of *manodharma sangīta*. A good and extensive *ālāpana*, intelligent and emotional *nēraaval*, creative and imaginative *swarakalpana* must effortlessly flow. The accompanists will naturally add their expertise and the audience get prepared to receive more serious and technically complicated facets of art. At this point great *rāga-s* like *kharaharapriya*, *kāmbhōji*, *kalyāni*, *tōdi*, *śankarābharana* and such find their place. Great and weighty compositions of famous *vāggeyakāra-s* are there in plenty and by including them; the concert reaches its peak. Each of these items can take as much as 45 minutes or an hour. At this stage, the first opportunity for *taniyāvartam* is provided. With the conclusion of the *tani*, the audience would have attained a degree of satisfaction and would be looking for a change. The interest of the audience can be revived in introducing a racing *madhyamakāla kriti*, as a prelude to prepare the audience to listen to *rāgam*, *thānam* and *pallavi* (RTP).

Before commencing the RTP the artiste will judge the mood of the audience, its receptivity, time that is remaining and the competence of the accompanists. Based on these, the artiste will select a suitable *rāga*, totally different from what has already been attempted and elaborate it as per established norms (Chapter: *Rāgam, Thānam and Pallavi*) and portray the *rāga* in all its details. The *ālāpana* is carved out in two sections providing equal opportunity for the accompanist. The *thānam* should be according to the theme and should keep the audience in rapt attention. The *pallavi* should convey sumptuous meaning. It is the *eduppu*, which transports the scholarship of the artiste. The trickier it is, the more holding it is bound to be. The percussion expert is expected to pick up the *pallavi* immediately and demonstrate it when the opportunity is given to him. The decorative aspect of *swarakalpana* lies in rendering it in different *rāga-s* and finally going back to the original *rāga*. It is

customary to have a minimum of four *rāga-s* in this *rāgamālīka* exercise. This is only a conventional and general format. RTP being richly *manodharma* oriented, is open to the fantasy of the artiste and so, can be constructed according to the imagination and competence of the artiste.

The conclusion of the RTP will give a feeling that the serious part of the concert is almost over. The audience will be happy to enjoy the lighter side of the concert, which includes, *devaranāma*, *tēvāram*, *tiruppugazh*, and *tiruppāvai*, followed by a *ślōka* in different *rāga-s*. A *rāgamālīka* will also suit the occasion. A *padam*, *jāvali* or *tillāna* has an added attraction. A well-composed *tillāna* normally precedes the *mangalam*. The format of a concert is called the *paddhati* or the trend. It was Ariyakudi Rāmānuja Iyengar who is said to have established the present trend, which is acknowledged by most of the artists today. Based on the above format, a concert would last for a minimum duration of four hours. In short, a good concert must have as many *rāga-s* as possible, as many varieties of *tāla-s* as possible, and represent as many *vāggeyakāra-s*. There should be even and balanced proportion of all the musical elements and eventually leave a lasting impression.



Bāni in Carnātic music

"Listening to music is an art. .You must hear with the inner ear as well as the outer ear"

When one questions a lay listener, which artiste he likes the most, by and large, the choice will depend upon the popularity of the artiste. Some will vote for the young or the innovative or the conventional old, the female or the male, the instrumental, etc. A connoisseur has his own choice. For a question, which artiste they would not like much, there is more often than not, a vague silence. Whatever be the reason, it is an established fact that all these are popular and performing artists, admired and adored. It is found from analytical judgement and their technical knowledge that each of the artists has a style of his own, something unique and individualistic, which is relished and enjoyed.

In retrospect, one will notice, that about five decades ago, a *rasika* was governed and influenced by certain specific styles of singing an established *bāni*. Over the years, with the advent of younger group of artists, the very institution of learning has changed considerably. In the first instance, the *gurukula* system (a practice where the student permanently stayed with the guru, the teacher and learned music), which was mainly responsible for the heritage of a particular *bāni*, does not exist any more; the reasons of course, are varied. Secondly, the princely patronage is gone. A keen learner of music has to fend himself, by running from pillar to post. The other disadvantage is, he has not listened to live concerts of previous masters. Today he listens to the tenth or fifteenth edition of recorded tapes of those masters, which critically conveys no meaning. The impression that these masters were the torchbearers of old *bāni* has petered out; it is no more pertinent, however meaningful or valid.

In fact, to a great extent, both emotionally and intellectually, this changeover is meaningful. One should understand that the impulsion of music has changed. In this confusion, something good has come out. Music has taken the much desired art form, either by compulsion or by force of circumstances. Whether these new art forms are superior or not, is debatable. Thus the new scenario in respect of *bāni* is a story of inventions. This does not mean that the artiste who sang decades ago was

blind or lacking emotional power; only his version and response was different from that of the younger generation. There is a radical shift in selective emphasis. To put it more succinctly, the author of a particular *bāni* had a particular concept based on this forte, a vision and a way of approach in keeping with his imagination.

Music being so abstract and so open to creativity when handled by different artists, shows up different facets, a different glory of the other side. It is therefore indisputable that birth of different *bāni-s* is a continuous manufacturing process and may ultimately lead to no specification as conceived in past years. This process is based on a reversible reaction from language to thought and thought to language. Unlike rock, which lacks plasticity, music is like clay, which can be moulded to any shape. The criterion of relevance in items of style or *bāni* is liable to change, as the change of style of art. At the moment of performance however, it is an ideal collaboration between the mind of the listener and the mind of the artiste. It is a fact that every one of the artists has his own intelligence, intellect and knowledge. A *rasika*, who listens to an artist with interest and intimacy, enjoys as well, a concert of another artiste, although of totally different *bāni*; he does this day after day, all with equal enthusiasm. In short, a great work of art can accommodate many interpretations whatever the style or *bāni* (*gharana* as it is called in Hindustāni style of music). There may be a few *gharana-s* in Hindustāni music, but there are as many *bānis* as there are leading Carnātic musicians. It is a common comment by a few that a particular concert does not represent any *bāni*. However good the music is; it is more often dubbed as mediocre. Going a step further, a young artiste's performance is not ranked high because the style does not fall into the basket of any established *bāni*. In fact, there is no need for such a conventional approach.

Looking at the other side of the picture, rigidly adhering to the *bāni* of the guru with no additional creativity or embellishments becomes uninteresting and jaded. The music of a stickler to *sampradāya* stagnates and stagnation leads to extinction. Till recently, the conviction was very strong that the *sis̥hya* of a particular guru should adhere strictly to that *bāni* and should not adulterate with any other style. Thoroughly wrong as

it is, many youngsters have taken courage to throw it to the winds and have even the intelligence to develop a new *bāni* of their own. How does a *bāni* take its birth? It essentially depends upon the plus and minus points of the performing artiste, opportunity and taste being other factors to reckon with. Musical taste can vary as the taste of wine or the taste of food. One might like the music of a great singer like G.N. Bālasubramaniam, but as a learner, has he the intelligence to absorb it? Yet another great singer Ariyakudi Rāmānuja Iyengar creates electrifying effects in his music. Has any one, done it as effectively? In fact, no *sis̥hya* of a guru can achieve the master's perfection; but he might evolve a totally new style, which is as good or even better than his master might. Besides other gifts, it is the *shārira* (voice) and the pliability of that voice which should help one to choose the *bāni*. Secondly it is the intelligence of the *sis̥hya* to grasp what his guru teaches and thirdly it is his own creativity, which contributes to the style.



Grammar in Carnātic music

"Music is less abstract than mathematics; it causes physiological arousal"

If a layperson were to witness a live music concert at its peak, he would comment, “why do they fight like this; it seems a virtual war!” There is considerable truth in this remark. The comments are based more on visuals, due perhaps to the lack of understanding of the grammar in Carnātic music. It is pertinent to note that this “understanding” of grammar, to the expected or anticipated degree is not actually necessary for musical appreciation. If in the process some aspects of grammar are missed, it is no great loss. On the contrary it may even help to enjoy the more salient features of music like melody, *bhāva*, *bhakti*, the lyric, etc. Every piece of art, be it poetry or literature, dance or drama, music or painting has inherent and necessary grammar in-built in it. Its use or abuse depends upon the endplay of the art. Grammar is one of the means to convey musical elements effectively and not an end in itself. If subject, predicate and object are essential components of English grammar, there are corresponding parts in Carnātic music too. Just as the complexity and diversity varies between prose, poetry and drama, there is diversity in its application in *kalpita* or *manodharma sangīta*. Between music, prose or poetry, there is considerable difference in its use and application. The truth however is, grammar is in-built in music and need not be overstressed; unwittingly it is adjusted.

But in Carnātic music where does grammar end and music commence, or are they inseparable? The answer is yes and no. In so far as Carnātic music is concerned, there are occasions where there is total absence of grammar, where grammar is subordinate and where grammar is over emphasized. By and large however, it seems grammar in Carnātic music is far more implied and considered important in comparison with other music systems, since academic aspects apparently get highlighted. The fact however is, more the grammar, less delightful it turns out to be, unless care is taken to make it less obvious. Otherwise it will end as “war” referred to above! In fact, the skill or lack of it lies with the artiste in projecting or being overzealous in it, where there is no need for it at all. In the normal circumstances, grammar, which is inherent in Carnātic music moves unobserved; only the effect is seen. What gives a

disagreeable feature is more often exaggerated with body language. These physical expressions and mannerisms perhaps are inevitable in an exercise like singing.

Grammar in kalpita sangīta

One of the finest examples in *kalpita sangīta* where intricate grammar is applied is a *varnam*. The slow moving *sāhitya* in the *pallavi* and *anupallavi*, the formulation of attractive *swara* combinations as *chittaswara-s*, more importantly in the first line among them calls for deep insight into the grammar. The salient fact in the context is the transition from the muted grammar to the more obvious melody. The other example of *kalpita sangīta* where grammar plays the strategic role is in the construction of a *kriti* be it simple or complicated. The skill in the construction of a *kriti* conveying the meaning of the lyric, the choice of the *rāga*, the simple or complicated *sangati-s* in varied patterns, the *eduppu*, all within the framework of the specific *tāla*, not to mention the *chandas* is a wonder work of implied grammar. The entire activity has become so common that the grammatical aspects of the item become less obvious and even completely shadowed. It does not bother the listener because, basically the message of music is conveyed in a way, which does not put any strain on the part of the listener to understand or appreciate music in progress. This can be explained with some examples. Examine the *sāhitya* and *kālapramāna* in the song, *dorakunā ituvanti sēva* of Thyāgarāja in *rāga*, *bilahari*. If the *kālapramāna* of the lyric in the *pallavi* is in one pace, in the first part of the *charana*, *tāmasagunarahita* it is double that pace, and in the second part, *rāmuni jagadōddhārūni* it is four times that. There is almost similar grammatical structure in the *kriti*, *śrī subramanyaya namaste* of Dīkshitar in *rāga*, *kāmbhōji*. Take another example. Examine the construction of the composition, *arunāchalanātham smarāmi*, in *rāga*, *sāranga* set to *rūpaka tāla*. Look at the choice of the words in the *madhyamakāla* portion of the *sāhitya* in the second half of the *charana*:

viprōttama viseshāntarangam
vīra guruguha tāra prasangam
swapradīpa maulividhrutagangam
swaprakāśa jita somāgni patāngam

The thoughtful use in the extension of the vowels to accommodate the beautiful lyrical content within the limited *āvarta-s* of the *tāla* points to the dextrous use of the grammar. Yet again, the *kriti* of Shyāma Sāstry, *Ninnuvinaḡā* in *pūrvikalyāni*, set to *dēśādi tāla* (*miśra nadaī*) is another such example. The degree of complexity in the use of grammar amongst the Thrimūrthi-s is independent and ingenious. In items like *padam-s* and *jāvali-s*, the grammar part is relatively less and melodic content more.

Grammar in manodharma sangīta

A question is often asked. Where is grammar in *ālāpana*? *Rāga lakshanas* do prescribe norms of grammar for even pure melody. True, much of this is not quantifiable as in the case of rhythm. Nevertheless there is grammar of a different flavour. For instance, the classification of the *mēlakarta rāga-s* or the identification of *janya rāga-s* is indeed based on strict standards of grammar. Consequently the development of *ālāpana* of a *rāga* is bound to be moderated by these norms however unwittingly it is done. So is the case with the *nēraṇal*. When it comes to *swarakalpana*, the exercise is both intricate and yet appealing where some amount of simple arithmetic is involved, like the usage of fractions and multiples of a fixed number, depending upon the *tāla* chosen. The exercise is to work out certain appealing combinations of *swara-s* within the framework of a particular *rāga* and accommodate them within a time frame. The skill of the artist lies in making such attractive combinations spontaneously and yet fluently and also at different speeds. More often this is carried beyond limits, setting up a competition of sorts between the singer and his accompanists. But why does grammar elude a common listener? The troublemaker is the *tāla*. The *tāla* system in Carnātic music is most bizarre and most complicated aspect. As is well known there are 35 *suladi tāla-s* and with permutation and combination, a total number of 108 workable *tāla-s* can be arrived at, although theoretically many more are possible. However it is equally well known that at best 15 to 20 *tāla-s* are in common use amongst which about six are very frequent as is seen in many *kriti-s* and *varnas*. But then, why brag about so many *tāla-s*? True, they seem to be theoretically applicable. But in effect, they can be practically adopted only in the form of *shudha pallavi-s* and performed as *rāgam*, *thānam* and *pallavi* (RTP). Without doubt it is all mind-

boggling and eventually turn out to be intellectual rubbish. The construction of a *shudha pallavi* in a complicated *tāla*, its display, diction and richly imaginative development (*nēraval*) followed by certain complicated exercise, like *anulōma*, *pratilōma*, etc. are indeed too complicated in its grammar content to be easily followed by an ordinary listener. This perhaps is the reason that the discipline of singing of RTP is gradually becoming extinct.

The most intricate part of grammar in Carnātic music is the rhythmic exercises adopted during the course of the concert and more importantly during *taniyāvartanam* (solo rhythm). This again is a well worked out and well rehearsed percussion ensemble, which, by and large, is not followed by the common listener. With little education, this can be made more meaningful and more melodious.

There are features in Carnātic music where grammar is totally absent. Items like *viruttam* are more melodious without grammar.

All in all, grammar in Carnātic music is an evil necessity. Its use or abuse, the intensity or significance is a delicate faculty, which lies with the performer. The less he makes it obvious, more enjoyable the music is bound to be.



Thyāgarāja

"Music is virtually formless"

The three *vāggeyakāra-s*, Shyāma Sāstry, Thyāgarāja and Muthuswāmi Dīkshitar were born within a span of 13 years. The senior most Shyāma Sāstry was born in 1762. Five years later in 1767 Thyāgarāja was born. Eight years thereafter in 1775, Dīkshitar was born. In the construction and content of their compositions, each had a unique and independent style. Prior to the advent of the Thrimūrthis, as they are referred to, the musical compositions were more lyrics oriented and classical music was relatively less. The Trinities discovered both *laya* and *sāhitya* (lyric) in music and utilised them to the full advantage. While Thyāgarāja conveyed *sāhitya bhāva* in his compositions, Dīkshitar was expert in transporting *rāga bhāva*. Shyāma Sāstry was a wizard in *laya*. It must be accepted that Thyāgarāja and his works have gained a unique distinction for reasons whatever. I have studied his compositions in detail in all aspects and the following write up is based on my observations. While much can be said and written about Thyāgarāja, here I have included two relevant articles, . 'The uniqueness of Thyāgarāja', and . 'Kṛiti-s of Thyāgarāja – a quantitative study'. The second article has been contributed by my colleague, T.N. Rājan, a well known documentation expert. These two articles are an outcome of the recent research we did in connection with the production of the CD on Thyāgarāja. It is pertinent to comment here that although Thyāgarāja is said to have composed as many as 24,500 songs, only a fraction of it is now available for study and rendition. The observations made in the above two articles are based on such available compositions.

Thyagaraja's greatness as a composer is often attributed to the divine power. This amounts to robbing him of his mortal faculties and assigning it to God. Just like Milton or Shakespeare, Keats or Browning, Kālidāsa or Bharthruhari, he was a mortal man. Until he grew up to be a genius, his life was just like any other. To a considerable extent it flourished on the atmosphere he was brought up as a child and the training he received during his babyhood and his youth. To comprehend how he grew up, a short sketch of his life from his childhood to the time till he became a Saint is added.

A brief life sketch

Thyāgarāja was born in Tiruvrūr in Tanjore district of present day Tamil Nādu in India in 1767. He belonged to a long line of a pious and scholarly Telugu family, domiciled in what is now Tamil Nādu from the village Kākarla, in Karnūl district of present day Āndhra Pradesh in India. His father, Rāmabrahmam, was a Sanskrit and Telugu scholar and was patronized by the Maharāja of Tanjore.



The family moved to Tiruvaiyaru also in Tanjore district, a few years after Thyāgarāja was born. Thyāgarāja learnt Sanskrit and Telugu from his father and became quite proficient in these two languages.

His mother, Sānthamma was musically talented and initiated her son in Purandaradāsa *kīrtana-s* and others at an early age. Thyāgarāja later became a disciple of Sonti Vēnkatarāmanayya who was a reputed musician and had won many honours and awards. It was said of him that withered trunks used to sprout when he sang.

Thyāgarāja learnt vocal music and *vīna* from Sonti Vēṅkataramanayya. Thyāgarāja was a devoted disciple and the bond between guru and *sisya* (disciple) lasted their lifetime. The guru recognized the genius of his disciple. This was expressed as a tribute in a concert given by Thyāgarāja where the guru said, '*dorakuna ituvanti sisnyudu*' – can I get a disciple of this prowess.



Added to musical training and his scholarship in Sanskrit and Telugu, Thyāgarāja regularly listened to the scholarly expositions of the Rāmayana by his father. He used to read the *ślōka*-s from the Rāmayana at these expositions. He also used to recite *Vishnu Sahasranāmam* as his father performed his daily *pūja*. This tradition was kept up throughout his life. Thus Rāma *bhakti* became ingrained in Thyāgarāja from his early days.

Thyāgarāja married Pārvathi who died early. He then married Parvathi's sister Kanakāmbal and a daughter, Sītalakshmi was born to

them. She had a son Panchāpakesan, who died childless. Thyāgarāja's direct line thus became extinct.

Adult and middle Life

As he grew older, he had not only learnt all that could be learnt from his teachers, but also extensively studied the musical treatises, the scholarly works and music compositions of his predecessors – the titans like Tallapakka Annamachārya, Jayadēva, Bhadrachalam Rāmadasa Purandaradāsa and Kshētrayya. His genius assimilated and mastered the excellent variety of their compositions. He also comprehended the works of his illustrious contemporaries. While Thyāgarāja's musical attainments were profound, he keenly desired that his music must have the divine grace.



He longed for the *darshan* of his *ishta devata*, Śri Rāma. At this stage of his yearning, an *Yatindrar* (Yogi) initiated him into *rāma tāraka mantra* and enjoined him to recite the *mantra* 96 crores of times

(9600,000,000). Thyāgarāja executed this injunction with absolute faith and spent the next 20 years in this Rāma *tapas*. At the end of it, he was restlessly looking for the eventual result. Dramatically one day he had the vision of Rāma and Lakshmana with their mentor, Vishwāmitra. He outpoured in great ecstasy, *bāla kanakamaya*, the phrase in the *anupallavi* of *kriti*, *ēla nī dayarādu*. Thyāgarāja's life mission was to reach the highest level of spiritual salvation through music. He took a vow not to be attracted to materialism and maintained it as a *sādhana* throughout his life. He politely refused gifts of the Maharāja of Tānjaūr as rewards for his great music.



Thyāgarāja desired to lead a life of a mendicant. He decided to sing in praise of Lord Rāma and live on alms offered by people. He had a large number of *sisya-s* who took notes on the *kriti-s* composed and later sang those in his presence for their final versions. Thyāgarāja visited a number of temples and composed *kriti-s* on the deities of temples

Kanchipuram, Tiruvotriyūr, Kovūr, Tirupati, Śrīrangam, Lālgudi, Nāgapattinam, Sholingapuram and Shīrkāzhi, including the five *kriti*-s that are well known as *pancharatna*-s.

Thyāgarāja's name and fame spread far and wide for which he expresses his gratitude to Śrī Rāma in the *todi rāga kriti*, *dasarathi nī runamu*. Distinguished visitors like Shatkala Govinda Marar, Gopalakrishna Bhārathi, Tūmu Narasimhadāsa, Gopinath Bhattachārya to name a few, came from all over the country to meet Thyāgarāja.



In respectful admiration of such scholars and music experts, Thyāgarāja paid his homage and tributes in the *ghana rāga pancharatna kriti*, *endarō mahānabhāvulu*.

Thyāgarāja's works

Thyāgarāja's works include *kriti*-s on Vishnu and Shiva, *Divyanāma sankīrtana*-s, *Utsava sampradāya kīrtana*-s and the dance dramas *Prahalāda bhakti vijayam* and *Nauka Charitam*. His desire was to make

a garland of *kriti-s*, which would have the brilliance and enduring lustre of gold, and the fragrance of fresh flowers like roses, jasmine and lillies. This desire has been amply fulfilled, as we see that even after more than 150 years of his passing away, his music endures in the hearts and minds of lovers of Carnātic music.

Thyāgarāja's compositions are remarkable for their quality, volume and variety. They excel in musical value, edifying lyrics, and are couched in poetic language. Further, the devotional appeal of his music is so great that it touches both the head and heart of music lovers.



Thyāgarāja's compositions can be seen in three chronological phases. In the first thirty years of his life most of the compositions were *Divyanāma sankūtana-s* like *ramābhirāma* in *darbar*, and *Utsava sampradāya kīrtana-s* like *hechharikaga rāra* in *yadukulakambhoji*. They are in simpler metrical settings, eminently suited for group singing in the devotional mode.

These *kīrtana-s* are well known for their poetic beauty and musical richness. His command of Sanskrit is seen in these *kīrtana-s*. In the next 30 years, he composed a number of *kṛiti-s*, such as *manasu swadhīna maina* in *śankarābharanam*, *dorakuna ituvanti sēva* in *bilahari*, *chakkani rājamārgamu* in *kharaharapriya*, which are innovative creations of the best art models. Using a few words in these *kṛiti-s*, he built in them *sangati-s* which are beautiful musical elaborations, variations and embellishments. These are his outstanding contributions and cut new ground in the composition of art forms.



In the last phase of his life, compositions like *ō rangashāyi* in *kambhoji*, *darini telusukonti* in *shuddhasaveri* reflect his spiritual heights and musical maturity. While *nādupasana* as a path to spiritual elevation is the main theme and message of his compositions, his *kṛiti-s* are also on a variety of subjects.

These include different aspects of music and musicology; religion and philosophy; ethics and morals; condemnation of pretensions and hypocrisy, and the value of *satsanga* and mentors. The lyrical content of these compositions are as great as their musical excellence. The two dance dramas (operas), *Prahalāda bhakti vijayam* and *Nauka charitam* are in the style of contemporary *Bhāgavata Mēla* with songs of descriptions, dialogues, introductory verses, and prose passages.



Thyāgarāja's compositions have served as the best models for later composers. His *kriti-s*, inspired by *bhakti* and reflecting his musical genius combined with *rāga bhāva*, set to simple but effective *tala-s* have been the main source of concert music for more than a century. He has composed in more than 200 *rāga-s* and created many new *rāga-s*. In some of the major *rāga-s* like *todi* and *śankarābharana*, he has composed close to 30 *kriti-s*, reflecting his creativity in *rāga* delineation.

A fine body of literature has grown on Thyāgarāja's life and works. These include insightful commentaries delineating the poetic, lyrical and spiritual aspects of his unique contributions. Notations to the compositions have also been brought out by eminent musicologists and musicians.



Fulfilment of a mission

Thyāgarāja lived for 80 years and his life was dedicated to a mission of attaining spiritual salvation through *nādopasana*. While he achieved his mission, he has also left an invaluable treasure of music for posterity.

Premonition and Final Mukhti

In the *kritis*, *Giripai* in *Sahana* and *Paritāpamu* in *Manohari*, he predicts his end. The final *mukti* came to him as predicted on 6th January 1847 on *pushya bahula panchami* amidst his *sishya-s* singing *bhajan-s*. He left his mortal coil in his eighties to become immortal.

Thyāgarāja āradhana festivals

Today Thyāgarāja is remembered worldwide through the annual Ārādhana festivals celebrated not only in India but also in parts of Asia, Africa, Europe, the United States of America, Canada and Australia. The Tiruvaiyaru Ārādhana is a tribute and homage to the great Saint where a large number of musicians and music lovers congregate to sing in chorus the *ghana rāga pancharatna-s*.

The uniqueness of Thyāgarāja

It may be hypothetical but yet a pertinent question, where would be the whole of our concert life today if Thyāgarāja had not composed his *kriti-s*? It was Thyāgarāja and followers, above all, he himself who created the concept of “concert audience”. There is after all a difference between a mass of people wedded into a whole, watching a cricket match or a horse race and a crowd made one by listening to Thyāgarāja’s *kriti-s*. It is the manner of unification that matters; the goal is the creation of a “new community”. It is just such phenomenon as Thyāgarāja that offers the best example of art and authenticity, works that make their impression precisely and exclusively because of what they are and not because of what they seem, thanks to the greatest possible clarity of expression with which he says what he has to say. It was Goethe who said, “If a man would tell me anything, he must say it clearly and simply. I have enough within me that is problematic”. The magic is, there was no Thyāgarāja before Thyāgarāja and there cannot be one in future. To call it accidental is perversion; to call it freak is perjury.

The manner in which the subjects are formulated, the bringing together and the integration of entirely desperate themes in the principle by which he works, is a “perfect non-plus and baffle to all human understanding.” It informs and permeates all his compositions in the smallest details as the whole, in the individual themes as well in the division of the whole into movements comparable to the acts of play. Every piece is a masterpiece and has a world of its own to express. This may even affect the details of form, style, the growth of a composition. But yet, no two works of Thyāgarāja are similar in form. It is not the “idea” which is primary importance, but the manner in which it is

realized in music. He was completely himself to follow exclusively in inherent demands of music.

Enormity and versatility

Composers of eighteenth century, Muthuswāmi Dīkshitar, Purandaradāsa, Annamāchārya, Shyāma Sāstry, to name a few, have stood as titans in their ingenuity for their prolificacy. While bulk is a force to reckon with, the enormity of Thyāgarāja's *kriti-s*, the versatility in his freedom of musical expression is unparalleled. Did he face the hardest and greatest problems in the endeavour? If so, how did he attack this problem? This is a creative power indeed. In his peculiar eloquence and firmness which is completely natural, convincing and artistic, in his "idea" and in his power to turn the idea completely to music, in his definiteness of expression to say whatever he has to say in the shortest and simplest way, his thematic construction, in perceiving the spiritual in terms of musical and the latter in terms of spiritual logic, all this and more, in essence, the impression that Thyāgarāja's music has made on the world.

The essence

The *kriti-s* of Thyāgarāja are not *mantra-s* to be recited in temples. They are not literary works to be commented about. They are excellent musical tabloids, which never age; on the contrary they mature with age. The more one sings them, one discovers every time a new luminescence, a new halo, a fresh freedom. What exactly is that which has made these compositions so unique? Is it the *sāhitya* (lyric), *satvika*, the music, the message or the grammar? Thyāgarāja is essentially a musician and only later a composer. Whatever message he has conveyed in its right spirit, by choice *rāga-s*, rhythm and spiritualism are facts to be attributed to divinity. It looks and wrongly so that he was not conscious of what he was doing when he composed, wrote or rendered. Looking at his life, he was an ordinary child from an average family. But it was a golden age of music and as a child he listened to songs of Purandaradāsa, Rāmadāsa, etc. With a natural instinct for music, he got the blessings of Sonti Venkataramanayya and eventually blossomed as the greatest composer of the age.

A few examples

Let us examine some of his compositions. Although he was a Sanskrit scholar and could compose with equal alacrity in that language, he chose Telugu as his medium perhaps because it was his mother tongue or perhaps he felt more comfortable with it in his task. Indeed there are quite a number of his Sanskrit compositions, which are as great. The one outstanding quality of his *kriti*-s is the projection of the *rāga lakshana* in the first phase of its construction. Examples are: *sarasa sāmādāna* in *kāpinārāyani*, *nijamarmamulanu* in *umābharanam*. There is no ambiguity, no secrecy. Secondly simple conversation (speech melody) is mesmerized into glorious music (music melody). Emotion is the essence of music. Listen to the song *lāvanya rāma kanulāra chūdavē* in *pūrnashadja*. Also his compositions are not reserved for a particular group of *rasikas*; everybody has his passion met, be it a *pandita* or *pāmara*. Each emotion is expressed in its true colour, design and measure. Take the interrogations he has so liberally employed. Some need answers; some have answers in-built. Listen to the *charana*, *itihāsapurāna āgamacharitam* in the song *nāradaguruswāmi* in *rāga*, *darbār*, or the *charana* in the *kriti*, *evarikai avatāramettitivō* in *dēvamanōhari* or again in the *kriti*, *evarunnāru brōva* in *rāga*, *mālavaśrī*, or the song *evaurā ninnuvina* in *mōhana* or even *evare rāmayya nī sari* in *gāngēyabhūshani*. Watch. the *swarāntara*-s of the letters, *evari(u)* in the *kriti*, *evarichchirirā* in the *rāga*, *madhyamāvati*. Now, who can compose these songs? Look again at the literary beauty in the *charana*, *tāmasa gunarahita munulaku....sadguna dhāmuni kanulāra madini kanukona*, of *bilahari kriti*, *dorakunā ituvanti sēva*. These are miracles.

More examples

The essence of the *rāga* is in the *kriti*. The *charana* in every composition of Thyāgarāja brings on the essence of the *rāga* in both the *pūrvānga* and *uttarānga* sections. There is a special design of his own in the structure of the *charana* in every song. The coining of the *sāhitya* in a *kriti* with the corresponding *rāga* is a unique skill of Thyāgarāja. Watch the *swarāntara*-s of the *anupallavi*, *adiyāsalachē* in the *kriti*, *vidajālādura* in *janaranjani*, or the *kriti*, *smaranē sukhamu* in the same *rāga*. Look at the apprehension in the *rītigaṇa kriti*, *dvaitamu sukhamā*

advaitamu sukhamā? In the *atāna kriti*, *mummūrtulu gumi gūdi pogadē*, Thyāgarāja has placed Lord Rāma at much higher pedestal than the Thrimūrthi-s. *Sāranga* is a soft *rāga*. Listen how Thyāgarāja has used it in *vīra rasa*, in the *charna*, *datti gatti karamuna śarachāpamu batti mūlabalamunu*, of *kriti*, *ēmidōva palkuma*. *Gamaka* is the live wire of musical melody. Watch the appropriate application of this feature in the *śrī rāga kriti*, *nāma kusumamulachē*.

Creativity

At one time or other Thyāgarāja must have questioned himself, “Why is it so important to my own psyche that I compose music? What makes it so necessary, so that every other daily activity, by comparison, is of less significance?” Why is the creative impulse never satisfied? Why must one always begin again anew? The answer is, the need to create self-expression, the basic need to make evident one’s deepest feelings about life. But why is the job never done? Why must one always begin again? The reason for the compulsion to renew activity is because each added work is only a part answer to the eternal question, “who am I” which leads on to the next part answer. Each artwork therefore, is supremely important. Each new significant work of art is a unique formulation of experience; an experience that would be utterly lost if it were not captured, as it was, and set down. Eventually it is through this means of his own creation that Thyāgarāja discovered himself and the world through his works. This gives a dramatic aspect to the composer’s situation. The need for self-expression is ever present. The work must either be entirely spontaneous, or if not spontaneous, then cajoled, induced, and gradually perceived so that each day’s work may spell failure or triumph. The making of something out of nothing is the special province of the creative mind. The composer is a kind of magician. “The inspired moment may sometimes be described as a kind of hallucinatory state of mind. One half of the personality emotes and dictates while the other half listens and notates.” Thyāgarāja is not a simple craftsman; he is a musical thinker, a creator of values, values that are primarily aesthetic, ultimately of the deepest human importance. His genius is attributed to “superb coolness under the first creative fantasy.” Perhaps this was his reply to the question, how he managed to compose such a

quantity and quality of excellent music. “Well, I get up early and soon after dressing up after a bath, I go down on my knees and pray Śrī Rāma that I may have another successful day. Then I have my breakfast and sit down with the *tambūra* and begin my search. If I hit on the idea quickly, it goes ahead easily and without much trouble. But, if I can’t get on, I know that I must have forfeited Rāma’s grace by some fault of mine and I pray once more for grace till I feel I am forgiven.”

Was Thyāgarāja aware that he was communicating with an audience when he composed? Unwittingly yes; not just that, but was aware of how successfully he was doing it. A composer who cannot in advance assess the effect of his piece on the listening public is in for some rude awakening. Although a conscious desire for communication may not be in the forefront of his mind, every move towards logic and coherence in composing must have been a move towards communication.

The Thrimūrthi-s

It was the glorious era of music. How fortunate and lucky the world was to have all the three, Shyāma Sāstry, Thyāgarāja and Muthuswāmi Dīkshitar at one and the same time! The individuality, both in style and diction of the three *vāggeyakāra-s* are too well known. Each outranked the other. Decidedly however, Thyāgarāja had the edge over the other two in terms of the choice of the language, style, grammar, construction, technique and presentation. If the other two had their own identity, their excellence can yet be unearthed in the works of Thyāgarāja. Take the language for instance; he has produced a wonderwork out of the day-to-day spoken language and brought out an architectural marvel and decorative mystery in its construction. Listen to these words, *ra rāma intidāka, enduku dayarādura, pēddala suddulu vinaka buddhi rādu, enta vēdukondu rāghava* and, *intakantē kāvalēna*. In presenting these universal truths, the easiest style is adopted. Result, the unlettered is baffled and mystified. The epics are liberally illustrated. in choice *rāga-s*, *kālapramāna*, *laya*. Compare *kanugontini* with *dorakunā ituvanti sēva* in *bilahari rāga*, *kōtinadulu* with *dāsarathi* in *tōdi rāgai*, and *rītigaula kriti-s*, *paripālaya* and *nannu vidachi kadalakurā*. If Dīkshitar’s *kriti-s* are rich in *rāga bhāva* and grammar, how is it lacking in Thyāgarāja? Compare *ō rangaśāyi* with *śrī subramanyāya namaste*. If Shyāma Sāstry

is a titan in *laya*, how is this faculty deficit in Thyāgarāja? Compare *ēndukō nī manasu karugadu* with *ninnuvinagā mari dikkevvaru*. Examples are endless. Much and much more can be said of Thyāgarāja. We feel we know Thyāgarāja because we know his compositions, just as we know Milton because we know his works. Our encounters with him are not face to face, but through the knowledge of his works. We feel we know him more intimately than many of our acquaintances because he was as charismatic in his music. In conclusion, every new artist, and for that matter, every new composer is a problem child, a composite of virtues and defects that challenge the keenness of mind of the listener. Thyāgarāja is different. What is unique about Thyāgarāja is that he produces just not the pleasant sound in his songs. There is very much more that can be heard and seen. Generations have listened to him and his works and many more will follow. The test of time it has stood is a challenge to any challenge.



Kriti-s of Thyāgarāja – A quantitative study

"The air is full of music and the composer need only takes as much as he wants"

Publication of T.K.Gōvinda Rāo's "Compositions of Thyāgarāja in national and international scripts: Dēvanagari and Roman, with the meaning and SRGM Notation in English, Ed.1999", has provided an opportunity for an analytical study of the Saint's compositions from different parameters to understand, appreciate and get further insights into the great works. An earlier analytical study entitled "*Kritis of Thyāgarāja, An Analysis*" by K.Rājagōpālan, as a contribution to the *Sadguru Thyāgarāja Bi-centenary celebrations*, published in the "Journal of the Madras Music Academy" in 1967, was an effort in *Ganita Bhāva* as the author called it. The present effort is also a study in *Ganita Bhāva* supplementing and complementing the previous study.

The data in 687 *kriti-s* has been collected using the above source with their *mēlakarta rāga-s*, *janya rāga-s* (derivatives) of the different *mēlakarta rāga-s* used by the composer, *tāla-s*, *eduppu*, and the starting points (respectively in *pallavi*, *anupallavi* and *charana-s*), the number of *charana-s* in the *kriti-s*, themes of *kriti-s* based on the qualification scheme of Dr. Rāghavan in "The Spiritual Heritage of Thyāgarāja", relating themes with *rāga-s* and *tāla-s*, deities on whom the *kriti-s* have been composed, personal references in the *kriti-s*, types of *kriti-s*, etc. These provide interesting results and will throw fresh light on the compositions. The following tables give the details of the analysis.

Rāga and Kriti Analysis

Group – Criteria		Rāga-s		Total	
	Classification	Mēla	Janya	Rāga	Kriti
1	Kriti-s in mēlakartas and its janyas	26	137	163	588
2	Kriti-s in mēlakartas and none in its janyas	13	(0)	13	16
3	Kriti-s in janyas and none in its mēlakarta	(13)	33	33	83
	Summary	39	170	209	687

♦ 687 *kriti-s* were composed in 39 *mēlakarta-s* and 170 *janya rāga-s* of 52 *mēlakarta*. This analysis excludes *Churnika*

♦ The 20 *mēlakarta-s* and its *janya rāga-s* that are not used are: 6, 7, 10, 18, 31, 32, 37, 38, 42, 43, 47, 49, 50, 54, 55, 67, 68, 69, 71, 72

Group1 Breakdown of 163 Rāga-s and 588 Kriti-s			Kriti
A	6	Mēlakarta rāga-s exclusively account for ...	103
B	108	Janya rāga-s of the above 6 mēlakarta-s contribute to ...	414
C	20	Other mēlakarta-s make up for ...	21
D	29	Janya rāga-s of the above 20 mēlakarta-s contribute to ...	50
	163	Rāga-s are used to compose kriti-s totaling ...	588

Group-1A, 1B Breakdown of 6 Mēlakarta-s – 108 Janyas			Kriti	
	Mēlakarta Rāga (#)	Janya	Mēla	Janya
1	Kharaharapriya (22)	35	11	114
2	Harikāmbhōji (28)	33	10	109
3	(Dhīra)Sankarābharana (29)	15	30	92
4	(Hanuma)Tōdi (8)	8	29	45
5	Māyāmālavagaula (15)	14	4	40
6	(Mēcha)Kalyāni (65)	3	19	14
	Total	108	103	414

Group-1C, 1D Distribution of 20 Mēlakarta-s-its 29 Janyas			Kriti	
	Mēlakarta Rāga (#)	Janyas	Mēla	Janya
	Chakravākam (16)	4	2	5
	Sūryakāntam (17)	3	1	20
	Sarasāngi (27)	3	1	3
	Kīravāni (21)	2	1	4
	Mānavati (5)	2	1	2
	Vakulābharana (14)	1	1	2
	Dhēnuka (9), Divyamani (48), Hēmavati (58)	14 (1 Each)	14 (1 Each)	14 (1 Each)
	Jhankāradvani (19), Kāntimati (61)			
	Kōkilapriya (11), Māraranjani (25), Nāgānandini (30)			
	Nāvanītam (40), Rāmapriya (52), Ratnāngi (2)			
	Sūlini (35), Vanaspati (4), Vagadhīswari (34)			
	Total	29	21	50

Group 2: Distribution of 16 Kriti-s only in Mēlakarta and none (0) in its Janya	
Mēlakarta Rāga (#)	Kriti
Bhavapriya (44), Chārukēsi (26), Gānamūrti (3)	10 (1 Each)
Gāngēyabhūshani (33), Kanakāngi (1)	
Nāsikabhūshani (70), Rishabhapriya (62), Rūpavati (12)	
Shanmukhapriya (56), Subhapantuvarāli (45)	
Gaurīmanōhari (23), Latāngi (63), Simhēndramadhyam (57)	6 (2 Each)

Group 3 Distribution: Kriti-s only in Janya and none (0) in its Mēlakarta			
	Mēlakarta Rāga (#)	Janya	Kriti in Janya
1	Chirāmbari (68), Dharmavati (59) Shadvidhamārgini (45), Varunapriya (24)	4 (1 Each)	4 (1 Each)
2	Chalanāta (36)	1	2
3	Gamanasrama (53)	1	3
4	Jhālavarāli (39)	1	14
5	Nītimati (60), Vāchaspati (64)	4 (2 Each)	2 (1 Each)
6	Pāvani (41)	2	3
7	Gāyakapriya (13)	3	3
8	Kāmavardhani (51)	3	15
9	Natabhairavi (20)	14	35
	Total	33	83

(Group 3–8) : Distribution of 15 Kriti-s in 3 Janya-s of Kāmavardhani (51)	
Pantuvarāli (51)	13
Dīpaka (51), Mandāri (51)	2 (1 each)
(Group 3–9) : Distribution of 35 Kriti-s in 14 Janya-s of Natabhairavi (20)	
Bhairavi (20)	18
Ānandabhairavi (20)	3
Hindōla (20), Shudhadēsi (20)	4 (2 Each)
Amritavāhini (20), Hindōlavasanta (50), Jayantaśrī (20), Jingla (20)	10 (1 Each)
Kōkilavarāli (20), Mārgahindōla (20), Nāgagandhāri (20)	
Sāramati (20), Udayaravichandrika (20), Vasantavarāli (20)	
(Group 3–4) :: All the 14 kriti-s are in rāga Varāli , a janya of Jhālavarāli (39)	

Classification of Rāga-s and Kriti-s in Shudhamadhyam and Pratimadhyam										
Group	Rāga		Shudhamadhyam				Pratimadhyam			
	M	J	M	K	J	K	M	K	J	K
1	26	137	20	100	129	445	6	24	8	19
2	13	0	6	7	0	0	7	9	0	0
3	(13)	33	(4)	0	19	41	(9)	0	14	42
Total	209 rāga-s		593 kriti-s in 174 rāga-s				94 kriti-s in 35 rāga-s			
Legend:	M: mēlakarta rāga, J: janya rāga, K: kriti-s									

Classification: Other groups , Kriti-s - Places of worship					
Divyanāma	84	Tiruvotriyūr	5	Tiruvayyaru	12
Utsava sampradāya	26	Lālgudi ,Tapastipuram	5	Kovūr	5
Prahlāda bhakti vijaya	44	Nāgapattinam	2	Tirupati	2
Naukācharitra	21	Kanchipuram	3	Śrīrangam	5

Descending order of number of Kriti-s in each Rāga and the Rāga-s used		
Rāga (Mēlakarta No.)		Kriti
1	(Dhīra)Śankarābharana (29)	30
2	(Hanuma)Tōdi (8)	29
3	(Mēcha)Kalyāni (65), Sāvēri (15)	19
4	Bhairavi (20), Saurāshtra (17)	18
5	Madhyamāvatī (22)	15
6	Ārabhi (29), Atāna (29), Varāli (39)	14
7	Kāpi (22), Kēdāragaula (28), Pantuvarāli (51)	13
8	Dēvagāndhāri (29)	12
9	Kharaharapriya (22) Mōhana (28), Punnāgavarāli (8)	11
10	Bēgada (29), Bilahari (29), Darbār (22), Harikāmbhōji (28)	10
	Mukhāri (22), Rītigaula (22), Sahāna (28), Yadukulakāmbhōji (28)	
11	Asāvēri (8), Surati (28)	9
12	Bālahamsa (28) , Dhanyāsi (8), Ghantā (8)	8
13	Husēni (22), Kāmbhōji (28), Sāranga (65)	7
14	Nīlāmbari (20)	6
15	Gaulipantu (15), Śrīranjani (22), Shudha sāvēri (29), Yamunākalyāni (65)	5
16	Ahiri (8), Kannada (29), Māyāmālavagaula (15), Nārāyanagaula (28)	4
17	Ānandabhairavi (20), Bangāla(29), Dēsyatōdi (8), Dēvamanōhari (22)	3
	Jayamanōhari (29), Janaranjani (29), Kēdāram (29),	
	Kuntalavarāli (28), Nāyaki (22), Pūrvikalyāni (29)	
	Pūrnachandrika (29), Shudha Bangāla (22), Śrī (22)	
18	There are 35 other rāga-s with two kriti-s in each of them	2
19	There are 119 other rāga-s with one kriti in each of them	1

Tāla Analysis

With the exception of few, all *kriti-s* fall into five common *tāla* groups.

Distribution of Tāla-s in Kriti-s			
Tāla Groups		Kriti-s	Percentage
1	Ādi (1-kalai, 2-kalai)	344	50.07
2	Dēśādi	90	13.10
3	Khanda Chāpu	28	04.08
4	Misra chāpu	108	15.72
5	Rūpaka	113	16.45
6	Ēka , MisraLampa, TisraTriputa, etc.	4	00.58

Distribution of Tālas in Rāga-s with 5 and more than 5 Kriti-s								
Rāga		Ādi		Deśadi	Chāpu		Rūpaka	Total
		1	2		K	M		
Ārabhi		6	0	0	0	5	3	14
Asāvēri		4	2	0	0	1	2	9
Atāna		8	2	0	1	1	2	14
Bālahamsa		5	2	0	0	0	1	8
Bēgada	#	3	1	1	0	2	2	10
Bhairavi		12	3	0	0	2	1	18
Bilahari	*	1	2	1	1	3	1	10
Dēvagāndhāri		6	4	1	0	0	1	12
Dhanyāsi		1	2	1	0	2	2	8
Darbār		3	2	0	1	4	0	10
Gaulipantu		4	0	0	0	1	0	5
Ghantā		2	0	0	2	3	1	8
Harikāmbhōji		3	4	0	0	0	3	10
Husēni		3	0	0	0	0	4	7
Kalyāni		5	4	0	1	4	5	19
Kāmbhōji	%	1	3	1	0	0	1	7
Kāpi		4	1	0	1	5	2	13
Kēdāragaula		7	1	0	2	1	2	13
Kharaharapriya		4	4	0	0	2	1	11
Madhyamāvati		8	2	0	1	3	1	15
Mōhana		3	2	0	2	4	0	11
Mukhāri		2	4	2	0	1	1	10
Nīlāmbari		1	1	0	2	1	1	6
Pantuvarāli		3	1	0	0	4	5	13
Punnāgavarāli		4	0	0	0	6	1	11
Rītigaula		4	1	1	0	2	2	10
Sahāna		4	1	1	0	2	2	10
Sāranga		2	0	2	1	1	1	7
Sāvēri		6	2	1	2	6	2	19
Sankarābharana		10	6	1	1	5	7	30
Saurāshtra		5	1	1	1	7	3	18
Śrīranjani		2	0	2	0	0	1	5
Shudhasavēri		3	1	0	0	0	1	5
Surati		3	1	2	0	1	2	9
Tōdi	^	5	6	1	0	5	10	29
Varāli		7	4	0	0	3	0	14
Yadukulakāmbhōji		2	4	0	2	1	1	10
Yamunākalyāni		3	0	0	0	0	2	5
Total		159	74	19	21	88	77	
Included are: 1 Each of * Eka, %Tripura and #Adi(Tisragati) . ^ 2 of Miśra Jampa								

Additional points for consideration and discussion

♦ The 92 *kriti-s* in *ādi 2-kalai* are in 45 *rāga-s*, with eighteen of them having more than one *charana*. Interestingly *rāga-s* (some of them unfamiliar/rare ones) that have fewer than three *kriti-s* are in *Ādi 2-kalai*, such as *ābhēri*, *ahiri*, *sūryakantam*, *hamīrkalyāni*, *kiravāni*, *kuntalavarāli*, *nātakuranji*, *sāma*, *sāramati*, *vāgadhīshvari*, *takka*, *vasanta* (2), *śrī* (3). The *kriti* structure and the *rāga bhāva-s* need to be studied and examined with reference to the *vilambakāla nadai*.

♦ Significantly 60% of *kriti-s* in uncommon *rāga-s* are set to *Dēśādi*. Around 100 *kriti-s* are in uncommon and unfamiliar *rāga-s*. And there is only one *kriti* in each *rāga*.

♦ The variations in the *eduppu* (starting point) of *kriti-s* in *pallavi*, *anupallavi* and *charana-s* are many even in one group, namely, *ādi tāla*. It works out to more than 40 varieties and these have not been taken for this study. The variations in other *tāla-s* also have not been taken up.

♦ The themes of the *kriti-s*, along with the *rāga* chosen to represent a particular one as well as the *tāla* structure for the *kriti* need closer examination. As has been seen, there is a correlation between the themes, *rāga-s* chosen, and the *tāla* selected for the *kriti-s*.

♦ Mapping of the themes of *kriti-s* need to be graphically represented to exemplify the different subjects handled and their interrelations.

♦ *Kriti-s* that indicate personal references, deities on whom *kriti-s* have been composed, anecdotes and episodes, and such other aspects need to be studied.



Special commentary on selected kriti-s of Thyāgarāja

Amma rāvamma : Kalyāni

This is one of the three *kriti-s* where Thyāgarāja has deviated from his *Ishta Dēvata* and appealed to *Tulasi*. It is intriguing why he did it and chose *Tulasi*. The song has a remote resemblance to the style of Shyāma Sāstry and the technical aspects of the rhythm are highlighted. An intelligent singer can display his prowess in making varied combinations in the *charana* both in the disciplines of *nēraaval* and *swarakalpana*.

Kāru bāru sēyu vāru : Mukhāri



The choice of the *rāga* for the *kriti* is novel. Watch the *stāyi* where the song commences. It is *rishabha* at *tāra stāyi*, which transforms the mild identity of the *rāga* into one of immense force and with equal impact slides down to the *ādhāra shadja*. What a spectacle of the *rāga*! And the message! “How dare anybody questions the princely stature, qualities and

rule of the great king?” The imagination is immeasurable and the quality of melody is indubitable. The *kriti* moves with all solemnity.

Nārada guruswami : Darbār

This is a literary masterpiece, addressed to Nārada as Thyāgarāja’s guru. The accolades offered are selective and appropriate in expressing a longing for his company. Acknowledging his mentor’s profound knowledge in *vēda-s*, *upanishad-s*, *āgama-s*, *purana-s*, Thyāgarāja expresses his ecstasy and wonders if there is anyone else at all who could have thrown light on these epics. “Who else could have prevailed upon Satyabhama to make a gift of her own spouse to convince her that *bhakti* is any day superior to wealth and pomp. The saviour of Prahalāda, and with such radiance in Your body which surpasses the autumnal clouds, protector of sages and saints, pray, protect me,” sings the Saint.

Buddhi rādu : Śankarābharana

The wisdom and depth in conveying effectively the universal fact is done in the choice of *miśra chāpu tāla* of the song, every time the resting note, the *ādhāra shadja* conveys the tranquillity. The tempo is slow and ideally suited to carry the message. In the single phrase, *buddhi rādu*, the entire gamut of the *rāga* is brought out. The opportunities for highlighting the *sruti* alignment are provided in every movement. Apart from the rich philosophy, the melodic content is also very rich. There is endless scope for *nēraaval* and *swarakalpana* and the item can be the main theme in a concert. The scope for percussion is also profound.

Girirāja sutā tanaya : Bangāla

This *kriti* in the rare *rāga*, *Bangāla*, is essentially popular for its rhythmic ecstasy and its *madhyamakāla nadai* (medium tempo). The



other highlight is in the skill of the composer in projecting the uncommon *rāga*. This feature is evident in the notation of the *kriti*. Because of the absence of both *dhaivata* and *nishāda*, one has to be careful with the *rāga*. There is no *nyāsa swara* (resting note) in the *rāga* and hence the *gamaka* element is minimum. All the *swara-s* are flat. Watch how deftly Thyāgarāja has

coined the notes, particularly usage of the sequence *ma pa ma ri pa sa*. The construction of the song is more in its technical merits than in the normal themes of devotion and prayer.

Āda modi galade : Chārukēsi

The *rāga*, *chārukēsi* is usually referred to as a combination of *śankarābharana* and *tōdi*. True, the first half of the cycle (*pūrvanga*) has the *swara-s* of *śankarābharana* while those of *tōdi* are significant in the second half (*uttarānga*) but the slide over from one to the other is a graceful movement and not mechanical as generally conceived. As a

mēla rāga, it has enormous field to play about but caution should be exercised to maintain the identity of the *rāga*. The *rāga* essentially conveys a feeling of sadness. Thyāgarāja uses the phrase *śankarāṁshudai* in the *pūrvāṅga* and uses the name of Ānjanēya in *uttarāṅga* in keeping with the identity of the *rāga*. The lyric is an expression of remonstrance.

Dorakunā ituvanti sēva : Bilahari

This *kṛiti* is a masterpiece in *bilahari* with an admirable level of excellence and virtuosity. First the spectrum of the *rāga*; watch the



prayōga-s of *sa ri ga pa dha sa, sa ni dha pa ma ga ri sa*. The very first *sangati* in the *pallavi* is a direct circumscription of the *ārohana* and *avarohana* of the *rāga*. Watch the clever use of *swara-s* *madhyama*, *dhaivata* and *gāndhāra*. The movement of the *kṛiti* is composed and steady. The lyrical beauty is sublime, in the *charana-s*, in particular. Examine the grammar. The first phase of the *charana* is in double the

kālapramāna and the second phase is four times that. Obviously the story is long and to accommodate it in a limited space and time, a colourful and decorative format is the only way.

Nagumōmu galavāni : Madhyamāvatī

This is an *utsava sampradāya kīrtana* set for group singing. The song moves in a single octave confined predominantly to middle portion of the octave. This gives opportunity to a group of people to join the chorus. The highlight is simple rhythm and not much of music melody. As the singing goes on, listeners are influenced to join the group, giving it a finale of sorts, to a function. The item is generally reserved as a tail ender in a concert. The song consists essentially of a graphic description of the Lord in glorious terms.

Nāda tanumanīṣam : Chittaranjani

The choice of the *rāga* is significant. It is *nishādāntya* (i.e., it ends with the note *nishāda*) and does not touch *tāra shadja* in the *ārohana*. The use of *chatusruti dhaivata* is mandatory and *shudha dhaivata* should

not be used. The intention is to use the *swara* embedded in *sāma vēda* and hence pregnant with the feeling of peace. In his submission to *Śankara*, Thyāgarāja extols Him as the embodiment of *nāda*, the primordial sound. To Him, the Saint attributes the art of enjoying the melody of the seven *swara*-s. To Him, he assigns the *swarūpa* of the five faces *sadyōjātha*. If one will pause for a while and reflect on the notes figuring in the



opening scale of the *charana*, *sadyōjātha*, he will find that the notes for that particular part resemble, *udatta*, *anudatta* and *swarita swara*-s of *vēdic* chant. The *kriti* outshine with the wisdom of Thyāgarāja.

Anupama gunāmbudhi : Atāna

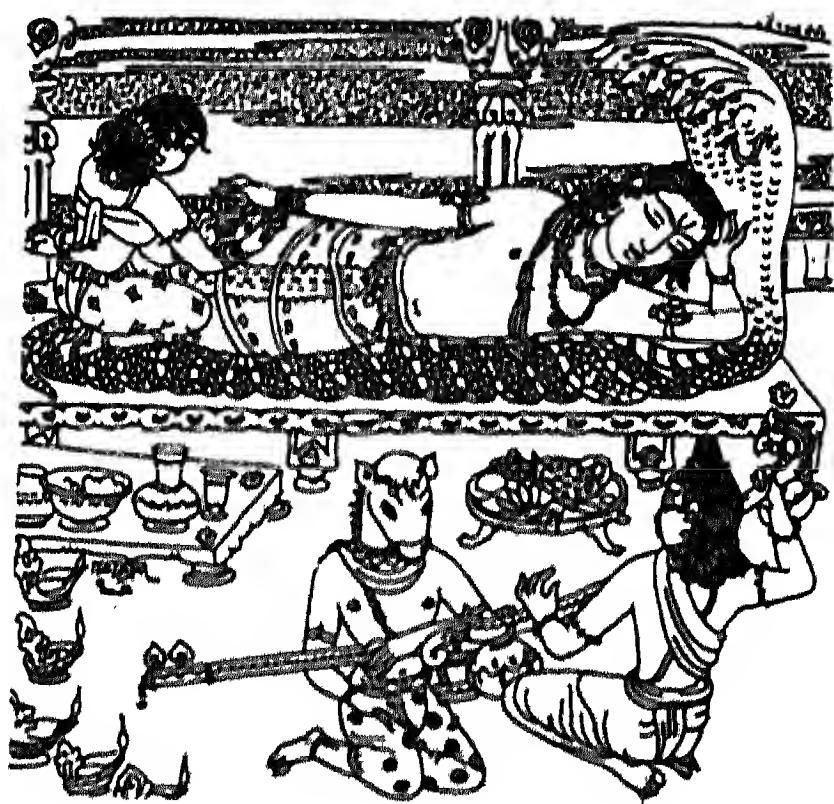
A majority of the compositions in the *rāga*, *atāna* starts in the higher octave i.e., *tāra shadja* although there are a few exceptions like *krithi*, *mummurthulu* that commences in *panchama*. The *mūrchana* of the *rāga* is essentially masculine; there is an in-built potency and force. The composition, set to *khanda chāpu tāla* has additional effect in that it has to take a *madhyamakāla nadai*. The *sangati* of the *sāhitya*, *anusarinchinavādanaiti* in the *pallavi* has a special connotation. Thyāgarāja has obviously chosen this framework to convey the special message. There is a certain degree of command in his appeal for justice, unlike polite acquiescence seen in a majority of his prayers. Watch how he addresses Him. "O, My Father, I have some standing to convey to You my helplessness and claim immediate need for Your grace. You have protected Draupadi and the *gōpi*-s in their hour of distress. Why this double standard? The choice of the *tāla* for the song is crucial.

Nāadopāsana : Bēgada

Bēgada is an ancient but yet popular *rāga*. The *swara-s*, *madhyama* and *nishāda* play a significant role. Attractive *gamaka-s* can be coined with the help of these *swara-s*. The commencing *swara-s* in the *pallavi* and *anupallavi* signify it. The melody persists right through. The Saint speaks of the inconsistent attitude of the Lord towards him, where once he is comforted, and discarded at another time. He is scared that it will reflect on the hostility between him and the Lord.

Mēlukōvayya : Bauli

This *kriti* is marked by sobriety, love and above all concern. Thyāgarāja believes that it is his duty to wake up the Lord in a befitting way. He could not have chosen



a better *rāga*. Between *bauli* and *bhūpālam*, he has preferred the former apparently because; the *prayōga* of *nishāda* in the *rāga*, unlike *bhūpālam*, has the cool as well as the warmth of the early hours of the morning. While coming down from *shadja* to *dhaivata*, the *swara*, *nishāda* acts as a pleasant *jāru gamaka*. And listen to the lyric:

“Please wake up. The entire world awaits Your royal presence”. The scenario the Saint creates is highly picturesque. “Celestial damsels are singing Your praises, ready to serve You. Lamps studded with gems have started unfolding themselves in white radiance.”

Endukō nī manasu : Kalyāni

This *kriti* is almost a challenge to Shyāma Sāstry in the field of *laya*. Although the *kriti* is set to *ādi tāla*, it has the solemnity of *ādi* and the dignity of *miśra chāpu*. Watch the *nadai* at the commencement, it sounds tricky. The *sāhitya* in this simple phrase is equally moving, although the *pallavi* cannot accommodate a variety of *sangati-s* evidently because of the intricate construction. Watch the *swara-s*, *ga ni dha*, at the

commencement, and the deliberate deletion of the *swara-s*, *ma pa*, thus giving a new facet to the *rāga*. The pace of the *charana-s* and the beautiful lyric, moving in the *madhyamakāla* brings a beautiful contrast from the *pallavi*, and also provides emotional phrases for *nēraaval* and *swarakalpana*.

Sangīta jnānamu : Dhanyāsi

That Thyāgarāja is a musician and a musicologist is evident from his own repeated declaration in several of his compositions; in fact, he is obsessed with it. He also indirectly asserts that music is only a means to



devotion and not an end in itself. He further vindicates that mere knowledge of music, without devotion can never lead to the right path to salvation. The melody in the *rāga* is highlighted to the subtle usage of the phrases, *sa ga ma pa ni, ni sa ga ma pa*. The *rāga* by its nature progresses slowly and conveys the meaning of the text discreetly. While singing, one is

tempted to repeat the text again and again. The item can be elaborately developed in a concert although there is no ideal place for *nēraaval*.

Manasa etulōrtunē : Malayamāruta

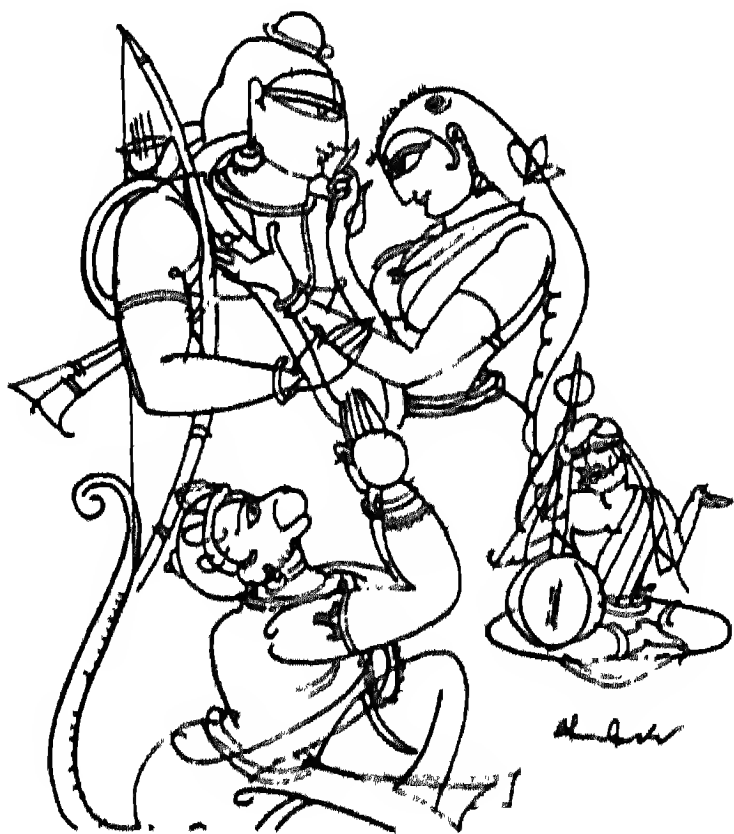
The *rāga* can convey intense *bhakti*. The deletion of the *swara madhyama* in the cycle has an emotive and sublime effect in the overall melody. *Daivata* is the live wire of the *rāga*. The cycle provides easy and appealing combinations in *swarakalpana*, both in terms of melody and rhythm. Thyāgarāja has rightly chosen the *rāga* to convey intense feeling of devotion, in a *kālapramāna*, which is neither slow nor fast. Extolling the great qualities of the Lord he appeals, "Why don't you forgive me and talk gently and soothingly?" Rendered with total concern and commitment, the song can stir up intense piety in the audience. It can fit in well in the early stages of a concert.

Mundu venuka : Darbār

The context in framing this *kriti* seems to be one of urgency and concern to prevent the robbery of a gift of money, given for religious festivals and worship. Thyāgarāja is in some difficult situation and wants help of the Lord immediately. He addresses Rāma with some fine epithets to provide security with His Kodanda together with Lakshmana. The *rāga* has a unique majesty; it has a touch of romance too. The subtle usage of the *swara-s*, *nishāda* and *gāndhāra* identifies the *rāga* from its close associate *nāyaki*. The *janta swara prayōga-s* in the *rāga* add beauty to the *rāga*. The song fits in well in early stages of the concert and *madhyamakāla swarakalpana* at the *pallavi* can prove attractive.

Sītapati nāmansuna: Kamās

Kamās is a *rāga* normally reserved for the end phase of a concert; good *padam-s* and *jāvali-s* are available in the *rāga*. This song is so



ingeniously constructed and intended to be sung in *madhyamakāla* with a simple *tāla* that it is ideally suited to take a place in the early stages of the concert and helps to build up the needed tempo. The *charana* in particular has good *bhava* and frame-work, that extensive *nēraṇal* and attractive *koruvai-s* in *swarakalpana* can be invented. The rhythm is a

treat to percussion players. Thyāgarāja expresses a feeling of fulfillment that the Lord showed himself in the presence of Ānjanēya and other esteemed devotees. He adds that it was cheering and a freedom from fear.

Ennaga manasu : Nīlāmbari

There are as many as six *kriti-s* of Thyāgarāja in the *rāga nīlāmbari*. Both in content and construction this is an outstanding piece. The first impact is in the presentation of the *rāga*. In this the *prayōga* of *jīva*

swara-s is clear. Since the *rāga* has its own limitations, the Saint has used his own unique imagination in the format of its construction. The *kriti* has not got the established sections (*anga-s*) like the *pallavi*, *anupallavi* and *charana-s*. In construction, it resembles the format of *bhajana sangīta* that was prevalent in pre-period of Thyāgarāja, essentially meant for group singing. It is also confined to a single octave, which helps both men and women to sing together. The *sāhitya* is essentially an exposition of the universal truth, where the uses of bodily functions are put to abuse. The *kriti* can be sung at any time during a concert, although it is ideally suited as a tail ender.

Sundarēswaruni jūchi: Śankarābharana

This grand *kriti* is almost forgotten these days. More gripping than the *rāga bhava* in the song is the lyrical rapture. The imagination of



Thyāgarāja and his concept of the celestial personalities are immeasurable. Although he is essentially a *Rāma bhaktha*, he often refers to other deities amongst whom Sundarēswara is one. His perception of the beauty of the deity is such that he believes that no other god can reach that impression. His dwelling is Kovūr, equal in opulence to Kāsi. He has

golden legs and wears bracelets studded with diamonds. On one side he has Brahma and on the other delightful damsels. On the one side he has *tambūra*, Nārada and other disciple eulogizing him. The praise is infinite.

Entamuddo entasogasō : Bindumālīni

A rare *rāga* and a rare *kriti*. The ingenuity of the *kriti* lies in the choice of this *rāga*, amongst thousands, to convey the *dīna* and *saumya* appeals. Added to this, the *vilambakāla* movement completes the theme. The beauty of the *vakra rāga* is skilfully brought out. The *prayōga-s* of the *swara-s*, *ma*, *ga*, *pa* in the *pallavi* are masterly strokes; even so in the

charana. Other *kriti* in the *rāga*, if any, cannot come close to this composition. A choice item to be introduced in a concert where the image may be sagging. It needs extra skill on the part of the accompanists to do justice. The *kriti* more often works as a tranquilliser in a concert. The atmosphere is likely to get emotionally charged if rendered correctly and this can prepare grounds for more serious music.

Śrī ganapatini : Saurāshtra

The *rāga* has a special technical significance in its structure. The subtle frequencies (*sruti-s*) that are in-built in the two *swara-s*, *dhaivata*



and *rishabha* are critical. While that of *dhaivata* is a wee bit higher than the highest (*pañchama sruti*) at the other extreme that of *rishabha* is slightly lower than *shudha rishabha*. Also, these *swara-s* are flat in the *ārohana* but in the *avarohana* both the notes are extended with added *gamaka*. The *rāga* is generally used at the beginning of a concert and is well suited as the inaugural *Ganapati stuti*. The *kriti*, commencing at

tāra shadja adds immediate tempo. Yet another point to be noted is that the *pallavi* starts after three counts, while the *charana* starts with *samam*, a structure that is seen in some special compositions.

Chera rāvademira : Rītigaula

The fulcrum on which the *rāga* stands is the *swara*, *nishāda* unlike its close relation *ānandabhairavi*, where the same note plays a touch-and-go role. Note how this dominant *swara* recurs with an extended function and also as a *janta swara*, throughout the song. The rhythm in the song is simple but striking *sollu, dhim thaka dhim, thaka dhim*. Thyāgarāja compares himself to an orphaned girl, a circumstance where love and affection naturally flow from any source not to mention from the Lord. The song is simple in construction and can be learnt with little effort.

Sītakalyana vaibhōgame : Śankarābharana / Kuranji

In presenting the *kriti* in *madhyama sruti* the *rāga*, *śankarābharana* has been given a different façade. Certain amount of ceremonial ecstasy



is launched. The item is perfectly suited as a concluding one, as a finale for the concert; a sequential peace is reinstated. The grand spectacle of the wedding in depicted. Note the importance the Thyāgarāja gives to Ānjanēya, “the hero of countless exploits” as he calls him. Glorious tributes are bestowed to Śrī Rāma, who causes terror in the minds of *asuras*, while at the same time He is a

picture of peace and serenity, a source of delight, the support of the entire world, a incalculable warrior, tall and spirited; He is the stronghold of his devotees.

Mā jānaki : Kāmbhōji

The *rāga*, *kāmbhōji* is more impressive and popular than its parent *harikāmbhōji*. Almost every *vāggeyakāra* has composed attractive *kriti*-s in the *rāga* in varied *tāla*-s and *kālapramāna*. If the *swara*, *nishāda* has no place in the *ārohana* in the scale, it gains profound importance in the *avarohana*. This dextrous usage of a single *swara* adds a unique flavour to the melody. Also, in the usage of the phrase, *sa ni pa dha sa*, the note *nishāda* is stressed with a higher frequency than designed and in the process gains greater impact. Every note in the scale plays an important role. The *rāga* can form a major item in a concert and can be painted in varied hues. Thyāgarāja has intelligently utilised the note *nishāda* in the *kriti* and a good part of the song hovers around that note. “By holding the hands of our Janaki, you have become famous”, says the Saint. He pays glorious tributes to Sīta in the song: “She accompanied You to the forests. She offered her real self to the care of Fire God to prove her faithfulness. Living under the Asoka tree, she withstood the boastful advances of Rāvana and yet controlled her anger.”

Ēmānadichchēvō : Sahāna

The *rāga bhāva* framed in this *kṛiti* is extraordinary. The pace (*kālapramāna*) of the *kṛiti* is even more striking. Note the commencing *swara*, *rishabha* and the intense *gamaka* that is involuntarily built into it. Watch also the *swara-s*, ***ma dha*** with which the *anupallavi* is conceived. The liberty to apply *gamaka* to all the *swara-s* in the *rāga* invokes profound emotion of *karuna rasa*. The *janta prayōga-s* of the *swara-s*, *nishāda* and *gāndhāra* and the extended note *rishabha* necessarily becomes the *jīva swara-s* of the *rāga*. In addition, different types of *gamaka-s* can be deployed for the same *swara*. The Saint appeals with all earnestness for His grace, “Can’t You listen to me, is it my destiny to be so treated? Without Your grace one cannot aspire for fame, longevity, good health and wisdom.”

Marugēlara ō rāghava : Jayantaśrī

Jayantaśrī is *rāga* with a special impact; this is due to the use of the *swara*, *panchama* in the *avarohana*. The usage of the combination ***ma pa***



ma ga and the complete absence of the *swara* in the *ārohana* generates a feeling of empathy. In the lyric, the word is *marugu ēlara*. The *dēśādi tāla* also adds to the savour. The item can be introduced at any stage of the concert. “I am not an orphan; in a sense, you are one for there is none to take care of you”. In paying tributes to the Lord, Thyāgarāja philosophises that

mind is stronger than impulse; even more rewarding is wisdom and it is the Lord that is wiser than wisdom.

Inta saukhyamani nē : Kāpi

It is not that Thyāgarāja is always sedate, in grief or sorrow. He has indeed found moments of pleasure. In this *kṛiti*, he expresses his bliss of chanting the name of Rāma, the bliss of singing in the three-fold aspect

of *swara*, *rāga*, and *laya*. Thyāgarāja has carefully chosen the romantic *rāga* to put forth his happiness and is evidently aware of his skill as a musicologist. The usage of the sequence of *swara-s*, *ma ni pa ga ri sa* is significant. The item induces a sense of relaxation and tranquillity. Although this *rāga* is reserved for the concluding part of a concert, this song in particular can fill up any gap.

Ō rangaśāyi : Kāmbhōji

It is interesting to compare this *kṛiti* with *śrī subrahmanyāya namaste* of Dīkshitar. While this is set in *ādi tāla*, that of Dīkshitar is set to



rūpaka. If one should closely observe the framework, in terms of notation of all the sections, i.e., *pallavi*, *anupallavi* and *charana*, in terms of *kālapramāna*, grammar, *rāga bhāva*, impress of *sāhitya*, *stāyi*, all are almost similar although the *tāla* is different for each. It looks as though one is the reflection of the other. It is a riddle as to how this has happened. This apart, the *rāga*

bhāva is pregnant. Watch the frequent *prayōga* of *pa dha sa*. At the very moment, he seems to be in intense trouble from his opponents and refers to it in the song.

Nī nāma rūpamulaku : Saurāshtra

Thyāgarāja's *mangalam* in *Saurāshtra* is rendered in every concert, although there are several other compositions of other *vāggeyakāra-s* to end a concert with. By choosing *Saurāshtra*, he has assigned a unique place to the *rāga*, both as a starter with *Śrī Ganapatni* at one end, and the *mangalam* at the other. As an ante-position to *madhyamāvatī* to follow, the mood leads to profound peace, tranquillity and indescribable relaxation, which should only be experienced. In the six *charana-s*, the Saint looks forward to ever-growing prosperity and welfare, eternal victory and repute. He offers all these to His eternal name and divinity.

Evarichchirirā : Madhyamāvatī

The *kriti* has a special import both in structure and meaning, a dignified status unique amongst the compositions in the *rāga*. Although set to a simple *tāla*, it enjoins the dignity of an imperial rhythm. The *rāga bhāva* is completely built in, in all its glory. Watch the commencement of the song and the *swara-s* thereof, the *ranjakatva* is profound. Equally captivating combination in the song is, ***pa ma pa, ri ma pa, pa ni ma*** followed by *charana*. Note the *swara-s* with which the *charana*, *okatesina padhi* commences, it is an odd combination. The *kriti* provides enough opportunities to coin varied *sangati-s*. The lyric relates to the archery of Kodandapāni, “a single arrow from Your bow is multiplied to a million and destroyed the demons Drumakulyas.”

Sāmajavara gamana: Hindōla

The song commences with the notes, ***ma ga sa***, the symbolic phrase of



the *rāga*. The pace of the *kriti* is *madhyamakāla* and adds some thrill if followed or preceded by a *prati madhyama* song. There is liberal scope for *swarakalpana* at the *pallavi* take off. The song is a glorious description of Śrī Rāma. “You have the majestic gait of an elephant. You are the maestro of the music born out of *sāma vēda*, an ocean of love. You are the essence of *vēda-s* out of which

was born the seven notes of music. You are delighted in playing the flute and have enthralled the *gōpi-s*.”

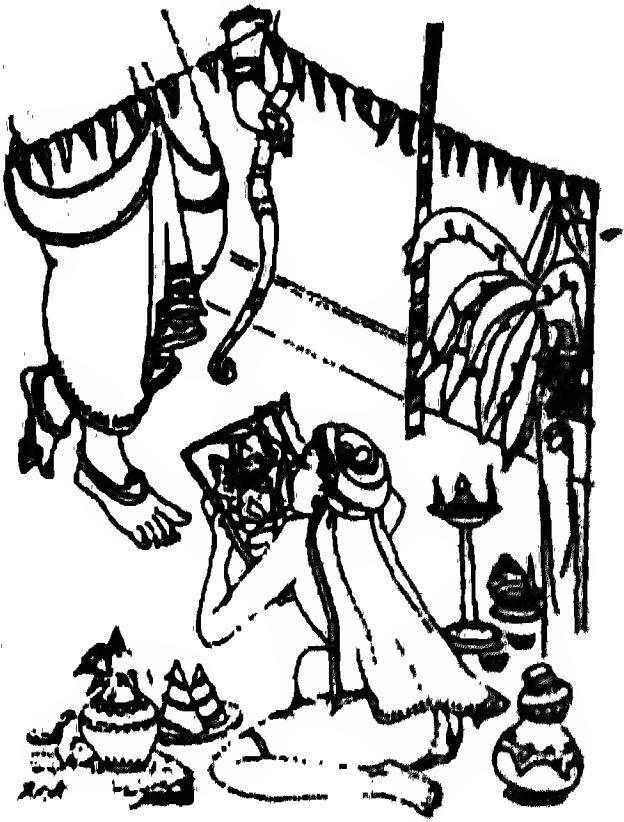
Rāma nannu brōvara: Harikāmbhōji

This is a simple but yet riveting composition, easy to render both in *kalpita* and *manodharma* features. *Rūpaka tāla* helps in innovating several creative features, particularly in *nēraaval* at *charna*. This will prove well to learn mostly by beginners. The *rāga* has enough scope for *alapana* and *swarakalpana*. The item will go well as the second or the

third item in a concert and can contribute to build up tempo without much effort. Thyāgarāja's strength in the usage of similes and metaphors is too well known. He more often uses them liberally in describing the Lord. "Your face is that of full moon and your eyes are like sun and moon; your form is ravishing. Only you can help a human to cross the ocean of worldly ills," says the Saint. There are references to Gajēndra and Lakshmi.

Nanu pālimpa : Mōhana

Thyāgarāja's skill in choosing the *tāla* and *kālapramāna* of a *kṛiti* to convey a message marks his originality. For instance compare the structure and movement of this song with *bhavanuta*, also in the same *rāga* and *tāla*. Each has its own message, merit and identity. If the former is set to *madhyamakāla* and is bereft of *gamaka*, and full of



exciting rhythm, this song is slow in movement and impregnated with profound *gamaka*. The *sāhitya bhāva* is immense and it is conveyed with great emotion. In the process, the *rāga* pours out in every line covering the entire spectrum. "How kind of You to have tracked all the way to bless me. How good of You to have understood my ambition of being by Your side and looking at Your

charming face. You have the figure of radiance of a gem. Your hand adored by *kōdanda* bow is held with *Sīta*." The *kṛiti* is known for its merits of construction, *rāga bhāva* and therefore can form a major item in a concert with elaborate *ālāpana* and *nēraṇal* at *karamuna sara kōdanda kantitō*. The *pallavi* is also well suited for *swarakalpana*.

Evarikai avatāramu : Dēvamanōhari

Commencing at *tāra shadja*, the combination, *ni dha ni sa dha ni pa ma ri sa ri ma pa* produces a potent and eloquent impact of the *rāga*. The interrogation as to why He did take the *avatāra* at all imposes an

authority on the part of the Saint. By continued and relentless questioning, Thyāgarāja admonishes the Lord, as it were, but soon convinces himself that this must have happened only to bless. "Tell me, at least now, why You took this *avatāra* on this earth? You were christened Rāma, an acclaimed name in the *vēda-s*. You are more handsome than Śiva or Brahma. You must have come to bless this humble Saint." The song moves with majestic gait in *miśra chāpu tāla* and brings in a dignity to the concert. To start a concert with this song will be powerful but one should have an unblemished sense of *sruti*.

Sundari nī divya rūpamu: Kalyāni

The *rāga, kalyāni* is rich and potential. There is enormous scope for development in terms of *manodharma*. *Kṛiti-s* can commence at any *swara* in the cycle; in this frame-work there are any number of examples. This *kṛiti* for instance starts at *tāra shadja* and the force is instantly built.



The *kṛiti* moves neither too fast nor too slow and therefore the accompanists are always at ease. Since the song is short, in relative terms, it is advisable to make the preceding *alapana* also short. In fact the story is blended into music and set to convenient rhythm. As the text is long, the letters in each cycle of *tāla* get cramped but with no dent in the flow or difficulty in presentation. The circumstances

for choosing Thripura Sundari, as the addressee is a little intriguing. The significance of the prayer of the deity on Friday is noteworthy. Thyāgarāja is delighted at the spectacle of the divine form of the Goddess. "Having heard of your divine beauty, the wise and the celestials swarm for your *darśan*. I had the sanction and the delight of your *darśan*. I fail to understand my own merit in this context. When celestial damsels come in rows to pray and were not rewarded, I had the unique luck of obtaining your *darśan*"

Kaddanna vāriki kaddu : Tōdi

This *kriti* is a masterpiece in *tōdi*, one of the best art forms. The truthful, yet philosophical statement, commencing at *shudha gāndhāra*, immediately proclaims the *rāga bhāva* effectively and with dignity. As



the *kriti* spreads, the *bhāva* also spreads. There is endless scope for creative music both in terms of *manodharma sangīta* and *swarakalpana*. The construction involves precise and rational usage of *nyāsa swara-s* and eventually the entire gamut of the *rāga* comes out in glorious shades. The simple truth is effortlessly pronounced. "God does exist for those who

steadfastly repose faith in Him and pray." Thyāgarāja adds that there is methodology in praying – discarding sleep, embracing the *tambūra* gracefully for the drone with pure and clean mind one should pray in chaste and melodious musical form. It is this *mārga* that answers, "Yes, He is there"

Dārini telusukonti : Shudha sāvēri

One of the finest compositions where Thyāgarāja has discretely brought out the *rāga bhāva* in various movements. The very first phase in the *pallavi* displays the *ārohana* and *avarohana* of the *rāga*. Although the rhythmic fabric is strikingly interwoven in various *gatis*, it is not at the cost of the *bhāva*. The highlighting of *lakshya* and *lakshana* are such that they accommodate innumerable *sangati-s* in grand style in all the three sections of the *kriti*: *pallavi*, *anupallavi* and *charana*. Listen to the *sangati-s* in the *charana*. The percussion permutations add thrill to the structure. Any *bāni* (style of singing) can find endless stretch of imagination in the field of *manodharma*. The *audava rāga* is ideally suited for *janta swara prayōga-s*, as can be seen in the *sangati-s*. Note the usage of the *swara-s dhaivata, rishabha*; it is captivating. The *rāga* is very fluid; for instance, just by the replacement of *madhyama* by *antara*

gāndhāra, the *swarūpa* changes and a totally different *rāga* like *mōhana* emerges. In introducing the *madhyamakāla* passage in the *charana*, the *kriti* resembles the structure of the composition of Dīkshitar. The *kriti* can help listeners to develop the art of building up various *sangati-s* independently.

Appa rāma bhakti : Pantuvarāli

A *madhyamakāla kriti*. The first impact of the *rāga* can be truly felt as it commences with *panchama* and the *anupallavi* at the *tāra shadja*,



unlike the character of the close *rāga*, *pūrvikalyāni* that normally has its origin at *ādhāra shadja* or *antara gāndhāra*. In every *charana*, the *vishrānti* is designed to rest at *shudha dhaivata* and the *samvādi* relationship of *madhyama* and *dhaivata* is highlighted. It is the inspiration and exaltation of Śrī Rāma that are accentuated in this *kriti*. Therefore art music in this *kriti* is not so rich. The

charana commences at *gāndhāra* and is so constituted that it provides endless scope for *manodharma sangīta* like *nēraaval* and *swarakalpana*.

Rā rāma inti dāka : Asāvēri

Thyāgarāja is an expert in the usage of figure of speech. Watch the pun on the syllable *rā*. The statement can be read as *rārā mā inti dāka* or *rā rāma inti dāka*. He does not leave it there; the syllable *ra* is used in several shades, *ra ra dasaratha kumāra*, *raghuvīra*, *nannēlukora* and *lera*. In keeping a close watch to such means of decoration, he also conveys the *sāhitya* and *rāga bhāva*. The persistent and characteristic use of the *swara* combinations like, *ri ma pa dha pa*, *ri ma pa ma*, *sa ma ri ga ri sa* are striking. The invitation for the Lord is expressed in varied ways of emotions, each time applauding him of great qualities. The composition is sober, sublime and supplicating.

Bāgāyanayya : Chandrajyōti

The choice of the *rāga* is a point to be noted. The *shādava-shādava rāga* has the impressive *swara*, *shudha gāndhāra* qualified with unique *jāru gamaka*, which accentuates the *dīna* qualities in the lyric. The qualities of *prati madhyama* and *chatusruti dhaivata* as *chāya swara-s* are planned to be highlighted. Note the resting end *swara* in the *pallavi*, *chatusruti dhaivata*. The song is just a statement and there is strictly no scope for *nēraaval* and *swarakalpana*. If so done, it may pollute the contents.

Swararāga sudhārasa : Śankarābharana

Whether Thyāgarāja is first a musician and then a composer or the other way about is difficult to say. In several of his compositions, Thyāgarāja uses the words, *swara*, *laya*, *rāga*, *mūrchanā*, *gati*, etc. which confirm that he is a master in the science and grammar of Carnātic



music. The technical detail he has gone into in such references is bewildering. He has also made it clear that music is essentially a means to devotion (*bhakti*) and not an end in itself. This message is loud and clear in the song. The identity of the subtle and mystic sources of the *swara-s* in the musical scale, the *chakras* (in the classification) and eventually the divine *nāda*

that is thus produced are all Supreme Bliss. The message is conveyed serenely, softly and pleasantly across a wide spectrum of one of the most potential *rāga-s*. The values of music are further highlighted in referring to the rhythmic features of music. "If one bangs the mridangam wildly without being aware of the intricacies of the rhythmic art like *tāla* and *gatis*, can the results produce joy? – '*tālagatulu teliyakanē maddalamu marddinchuta sukhamā*'. If one is equipped with the knowledge of *rāga*, he attains salvation ending the countless cycles of birth and death." The *kriti* brings out the entire gamut of the *rāga* in the most colourful way.

Sogasugā mridanga : Śrīranjani

The rhythm produced by the *mridangam* and played as per right principles and right rules, like prosody, proper intervals, pure devotion and moods (*navarasas*), is indeed a difficult task. It needs great courage and conviction to present the sublime thoughts of *upanishad-s* this way. Thyāgarāja questions if there is ever one who can do it, including self. The spectrum of the *rāga* is well brought out. Watch the initial *swara-s*, ***ma ni ni dha*** and the point where the word *mridanga* starts, and the *aridi* (stress point) of the word that follows. All the parameters of musical construction are dextrously coordinated. The *swara-s*, ***ri ga ma*** of the word *yukti* in the *charana*; is all at the *tāra stāyi* and effectively conveys the meaning. One of the famous *kriti-s* where the skill as a composer is well reflected.

Ennāllu yūrake : Śubhapantuvarāli

The *kriti* is emphatic both in terms of *rāga bhāva* and lyrical content. Evidently, Thyāgarāja is desperate, disappointed and even exasperated to the point of defiance. He seems to take a challenge, “let me see how long You propose to discard me.” And there his protest ceases. He resorts to question the discrimination of the Lord. “Did You not fulfil the desires of the sages? Did You not protect, at the instance of Your wife, innumerable devotees? Why not me?” Notice how well the *rāga bhāva* gets in at the very commencement. Watch the *swara-s*, ***sa ri ga*** with which the letter word, *yūrake* ends, where the *gāndhāra* is highlighted. This is followed by richness of the *swara*, *dhaivata* in the word *chutamu*. Also note the ending of the *pallavi*; it is captivating. Thereafter the emotion (grief) explodes in calling the Lord. “*Ō Rāma*”. What a combination of devotion and disappointment! How can the Lord not oblige? The usage of the combination, ***pa ma ga***, and ***ga ri ga*** in the *charana-s* are equally forceful

Vara rāga laya : Chenchukāmbhōji

This is yet another *kriti* where Thyāgarāja indirectly asserts himself as an unquestionable pundit in the science of music. He even goes a step further to question the scholarship of others and to do this, he chooses a *rāga* like *chenchukāmbhōji*. The *rāga* has intense *vakra sanchāra* in the

ārohana, 'sa ga ri ga ma pa ma dha ni dha pa ni dha ni sa'. What a satire and what a challenge! It needs great skill to deal with the *rāga*. There is absolutely no *gamaka*. "There are people who blabber and chatter pretending to be top-notch experts. In fact, they do not have a clue in their brains about the distinctions of *rāga* notes and *mūrchana* trills. They chatter as if they are ardent followers of *rāga* and rhythm."

Gītārthamu : Surati

One of the finest compositions in the *rāga*. In every phrase, the *rāga* is lavish and the entire spectrum is adequately covered. Watch the *prayōga*



sequence, *ma ga pa ma ri*, which is the essence of the *rāga*. The choice is perfect to convey the message of a universal truth – the significance of the *Gīta* and the bliss of music. "One has to delve deep into each to understand and behold them," says Thyāgarāja. The five creeds centred on *Hari*, *Hara*, *Āditya*, *Kāla* and *Karma* are well projected. Even though *surati* is a *rāga* that has its place at the

end of a concert, this *kṛiti* has such unique content and construction that it can come up any time in a concert.

Vinarāda nā manavi : Dēvagāndhārī

A highly emotional *rāga* characterised by the crafty usage of the *swara-s*, *gāndhāra* and *nishāda*. The *swara-s* need extension, with *jāru*, *kampita* and *vali gamaka-s*, without which the *rāga* unwittingly slides on to its counterpart, *ārabhi*. A *rāga*, which has also its identity in relaxed singing. *Karunā rasa* is the hallmark of the melody. The plea, "Can't You listen to my appeal?", fits in so well. Words, *nā manavi* corresponding to the *swara-s*, *ma ga ri, ri ma pa* forthwith brings out the *rāga bhāva*. The commencing phrases of the *charana-s* have even greater telling effect. The Saint tempts the Lord and says, "When youthful damsels call You, can't You listen?"

Nagumōmu ganalēni : Abhēri

This is the only composition of Thyāgarāja in this *rāga*. There is pathos as a predominant element in the *rāga*. Note the usage of the phrase, *sa ga ma pa ni sa*. The *krīti* is known for its melodic beauty. It moves well over an octave and the *sāhitya* at the higher octave and beyond is captivating. The flow of the text is stately in keeping with the meaning of the lyric. The *charana* brings in anecdotes of the incidents in the epic. The end phrase in the composition has a *madhyamakāla* lyric appended and this brings a unique decoration to the construction.

Gurulēka etuvanti : Gaurīmanōhari

The significance and importance of a mentor (*Sadguru*) in the success of life is adequately stated in this impressive *mēla rāga* and in the impact



of the rhythm *khanda chāpu*. The spiritual illumination won through the *guru* can counter the mental anguish caused by the attachment to wife and family – *thanuvu, suta, dhana, dhara, dhāyādhi* and *bhāndavulu*. Both melodic and rhythmic contents are well balanced and the *madhyamakāla* pace induces a unique thrill. The *rāga* has wide expanse and is open for

elaborate *vyavahāra* and manipulation. The piece can be handled as a major item in a concert. The *khanda chāpu* wedged between other permutations brings out a classic change

Rāga sudhārasa : Āndōlika

The ingenuity of Thyāgarāja lies in the choice of this *rāga*. It is a mystery how such choice *rāga-s* come to his mind. Although a tough configuration, it fits in ideally to the context. The *rāga* is characterised by the *jāru gamaka* of the two *swara-s*, *nishāda* and *madhyama*. Watch the commencement of the *krīti*. It starts with *nishāda* with extended *gamaka*, followed by a similar character of *madhyama*. This qualifying

feature of the *rāga* is persistent right through. Also observe the *stāyi* and *swara* where the *anupallavi* commences; it has a pounding impact. The combination *sa dha ma ri* in the *avarohana* is skilfully built in. The message is loud and clear. “The essence of the *rāga* produces beneficent results of *yoga*, *yāga*, *tyāga* and *bhōga*; drink it and enjoy.”

Vēnugāna lōluni : Kēdāragaula

A unique *rāga*, which is pregnant with *śringāra rasa* and the scene is related to Śrī Krishna, the Lord loved by *gōpikastrī-s*. What a wonderful choice. Compositions in this *rāga* always command excellent lyrical content. Varied types of *gamaka-s* can be coined when an amorous thrill



is created. In short, the *rāga* is an ocean of emotions. The extension of the *swara*, *rishabha* is symptomatic and the preceding *gāndhāra* identifies and differentiates it from the close *rāga*, *surati*. It is again strange why Thyāgarāja has chosen Lord Krishna this time. “One needs a thousand eyes to appreciate the beauty of Krishna” he says. The scene is candid. Watch the

commencing *swara-s*, *pa sa ni dha*. of the *charana*, *vikasita pankaja vadanalu vivida gatula nādaga nokari kokaru karamunanidi vōrakanula jūdaga*. Charming ladies surround the Lord with tresses decorated with flowers. The youth of surpassing beauty is the star of the procession. Women of ravishing beauty precede him, dancing hand in hand to varied rhythms. They glance at him shyly. The spectacle is extraordinary and the emotion impassioned. The lyrical beauty is fascinating.

Evarūrā ninuvinā : Mōhana

The song commences with the symbolic phrase of the *rāga* with the *swara-s* *ga pa dha ri sa* and the second half of the *pallavi* completes the cycle of the *rāga* just like in any other song. Set to *miśra chāpu*, the scope for a variety of *sangati-s* is not there; instead, the *kriti* is

responsive and emotive. The appeal is immense in his pleadings in the *anupallavi*. The stress on the *antara gāndhāra* strikes the heart as the *jīva swara* of the *rāga* in combination with *rishabha*. Indulging in *nēraval* may not be pleasant at any point of the lyric, but will fit in well at the commencing phrase and is a suitable place for a variety of combinations, which in turn provides enough opportunities for percussion extravaganza. The item can prove a major one in a concert and even for *tani āvartanam*.

Tera tīyagarāda : Gaulipantu

The *rāga* is marked by the deletion of the *swara-s*, *gāndhāra* and *dhaivata* in *ārohana*, the intensity of *madhyama* and *nishāda* and the



delicacy of the *swara-s*, *rishabha* and *dhaivata*. The *sruti* (frequency) of *madhyama* is slightly higher than *shudha madhyama*. The *rāga* conveys *karunā rasa*. The story goes that when Thyāgarāja visited Tirupati, he could not have *darśan* of the Lord, as there was a curtain at that time in front of the deity. The pleadings "to remove the curtain" is figurative. The Saint, in spite of

his wisdom and learning is aware that he has many inadequacies and failures. His pleadings are to save him from these and clear them. He craves for the four blessings of "right conduct, taintless wealth, genuine love and devotion." He quotes some meaningful illustrations.

Nāma kusumamulachē : Śrī

If one should look for the complete *rāga lakshana* and *swarūpa* of the *ghana rāga*, *śrī*, it is found in this *kriti*. The graceful movement, the *kālapramāna*, the highlighting of the *swara gāndhāra* by *jīva swara* at appropriate and recurring intervals bring out the essence of the *rāga*. The frequency of the *swara-s*, *gāndhāra* and *rishabha* are designed to be slightly lower than normal. The accolades he bestows on Śrī Rāma are

excellent. The value of Rāmanāma is accentuated. If *endarō mahānu bhāvulu* is one facet of the *śrī rāga*, this *kriti* has yet another face, enriched with forceful *gamaka*-s. Introduction of the *kriti* in the initial stages of a concert will suit well, but *nēraaval* or *swarakalpana* will ruin the graceful structure of the *kriti*.

Rāmabhākti samrājya : Shudha bangala

Shudha bangala, a derivative of *kharaharapriya*, is a *vakra rāga*. The deletion of *gāndhāra* in the *ārohana* and its extended *gamaka* usage in the *avarohana*, as seen in the *rāga śrī*, generates a feeling of devotion. Thyāgarāja considers *bhakti* as a kingdom by itself and adds — blessed are those who have attained it. The mere sight of these sublime souls is conferring bliss. Those who are enraptured by the Lord in their straight and clear devotion can experience this. This *kriti* is well suited to initiate a concert and infuse *bhakti* straightaway. Crisp *madhyamakāla swarakalpana* with myriad combinations to go with *pallavi*, adds flavour to presentation.

Nādupai balikēru : Madhyamāvati

The *rāga* chosen basically is full of *bhakti rasa*. In utilising this *rāga*, Thyāgarāja has skilfully used the soulful passages, *rī ma rī, rī ma pa, pa ni ma pa, pa ni ma, ma rī sa*. Watch the *eduppu* of the *anupallavi*. It starts with the note *panchama* and leaps to *rishabha*, which generates an electrifying effect. Thyāgarāja too being after all a mortal is involved in family feuds. He has chosen this song to express his distress. He is in grief of the motives attributed to him, that he demanded partition of property from his *dhāyādhi*-s, that he complained he was a destitute, that he intrigued in the division of the family, *et al*.

Śrī nārada nāda : Kānada

Thyāgarāja has composed just a couple of *kriti*-s in the *rāga*. Both of them are set to such a *kālapramāna*, that is in keeping with the emotion of the *rāga*; slow and richly charged with *bhāva*; *karunā rasa* dominates. The *rāga* gains a unique dignity in the *swara*, *gāndhāra* in conjunction with the *ādhāra shadja* and *madhyama*. With the addition of *nishāda* and *panchama*, the cycle is complete. The *prayōga ni pa ga ma rī sa* is electrifying. The *swara*, *gāndhāra* is always extended and the *gamaka* in

the *swara*, *ma* symptomatic. The composer is fully conscious of the melody of the *rāga* and uses the phrases with dexterity. The reference to Nārada is also significant because Nārada is symbolic of music. The Saint compares Nārada with the bee humming around the lotus. Indirectly he announces that he is a *vainika* also and refers to the fact that it is only in the veena that unique musical sounds similar to *vēda* can be produced, is always associated with divinity and that it provides endless scope for *manodharma sangīta* like *nēraaval* and *swarakalpana*.

Uyyāla lūgavayya : Nīlāmbari

There is a sentiment that this *rāga* or the *kṛiti* in the *rāga* should not be transferred from the guru to *sisya* and it is said that the result in such an event would end up in a tragedy! However, there is an in-built *bhakti* and *karunā rasa* in the *rāga*. Children are put to sleep while singing this



rāga and therefore referred to as *nidrarūpa shānti*. The *rāga* moves at *ativilambakāla* and suits the evening hours of the day. The *swara-s*, *rishabha* and *madhyama* have a relaxed status. *Gāndhāra* and *madhyama* have intense stress while *rishabha* has a delicate touch. Thyāgarāja puts the Lord on the swing and rocks him with a galaxy of chosen people round him, as Nārada pays his obeisance. Vēdic

and *upanishad* music is being chanted amidst damsels of ravishing beauty. What better scenario is needed for the Lord to delight in?

Rānidhī rādu : Manirangu

Although the term *nidhi* means wealth, the Saint actually means events in life. Nevertheless, it is true of wealth also. It is destiny that controls events. Unless ordained and destined one can neither avoid nor cause to happen what one wants, be *rākshasa* or *bhusura*. Thyāgarāja reconciles to himself that if he is destined, he should get the sanction of the Lord. The *rāga lakshana* is clear. The usage of the *swara*

combination *ma ga ri sa* is striking in contrast with *ri ga ri sa* identified with *rāga, śrī*. The *swara-s* in the *rāga* are extended as it is clear in the construction. There is also scope for the application of *janta swara-s* like *ri ri*. Although the *rāga, manirangu* generally occupies the end slot, this *kriti* can fit in at any place in a concert.

Enduku peddalavalē : Śankarābharana

Compositions in *śankarābharana* commencing at *ādhāra shadja* and moving in *vilambakāla* have a unique dignity. The song moves in a well-phased rhythm from *swara* to *swara* in a free and natural way, yet there is no wasteful idleness. There is rest and repose at every *swara*. One of the popular songs in the *rāga*, which can be made the main item. Both in construction and content, the *kriti* is complete and spellbinding. Framed to run in slow speed, it provides endless opportunities to fabricate many *sangati-s* covering the entire gamut of the *rāga* and thrilling rhythm. There are several places for *nēraval* exercises as well as *swarakalpana*. The rhythmic framework also provides suitable opportunity for *taniyāvartanam*. Thyāgarāja displays his humility and appeals to Lord to bless him with wisdom as bestowed on great ones. While at one point he admits that he is knocking arrogantly from door to door for wisdom, he indirectly articulates his sense of self by saying that he is aware of the profound meanings of *vēda, śāstra, bhēda rahita* philosophy, etc. He also smugly says that he is aware of the secrets of *nāda vidya*. The song should be rendered in an effortless way, lest the philosophy is tainted. The framework of the song and the great *rāga* can help the artist to make it a prime item in a concert, to be followed by *nēraval, swarakalpana* and *taniyāvartanam*.

Nādalōludai : Kalyānavasanta

The *prayōga* of *sa ga ma, dha pa ma ga, ni dha pa ma ga* is fictional. The *jāru gamaka* from *kakali nishāda* to *shudha dhaivata* is mythical. That Thyāgarāja is a master musician and musicologist is evident in the design of the *kriti*. In the *sāhitya* he indeed speaks about it, the derivatives of *rāga-s* by the manipulation of the seven *swara-s*. "It is through this that the Trinities, Indra, Ganēśa and Subramanya, had done *nadopasana*"

Kanugonu saukhyamu : Nāyaki

In this *kriti*, the beauty lies in the exposition of the *rāga*. The *kriti* starts with the stamp of the *rāga*, with *sanchāra*, *ri ma pa dha ni dha pa*. Note the extension of the *swara nishāda*. It is even more positive in the *anupallavi*. The entire spectrum of the melody, particularly in the higher octave comes out in full tune. The truth in the *kriti*, viz. that unless there is integration of the body and mind, *mōksha* cannot be achieved, is effectively conveyed.

Sarasa sāmādāna : Kāpinārayani

The *rāga* in this *kriti* is symbolic. The *vakra shādava sampūrna rāga* has the characteristic phrase, *ma ga ri ga ri sa* and *gāndhāra* is missing

in the *ārohana* of the cycle. This adds a unique relish whatever the combination. The resting *swara-s* are minimal and the melody moves at a fast pace with little or no configuration of *gamaka*. This framework contributes to a thrill of its own in a concert. Thyāgarāja extols the skill of the Lord in utilising the four *margas* of preservation, temptation, separation and



subjugation and finally annihilation. He supports this fact from an illustration from the Epic Rāmāyana.

Sangīta śāstramu : Sālagabhairavi / Mukhāri

Thyāgarāja's abounding and wealthy knowledge of music and self-awareness is widely spread in many of his compositions, sometimes, almost to the point of bragging. In this *kriti*, he asserts that the way he has practised, '*Thyāgarāju nērchina..*' and attained proficiency is the way to attain the bliss of *sarūpya*. He also adds that the story of Rāma contains the essence of nine *rasā-s* or human feelings, devotion, grace, and compassion, to name a few. This is one of the rare *kriti-s* in *sālagabhairavi*, which moves in *madhyamakāla*.

Mēnūjūchi mōsabōku : Sarasāngi

This is the only *kriti* in the *rāga*. The *mēla rāga* gives the impression of a combination of *śankarābharana* in the *pūrvānga* of the *rāga* and *māyāmālavagaula* in the *uttarānga* although in totality it gives a different flavor. Because of the usage of the note *shudha dhaivata*, it gives both the emotions of romance and humor. The *kriti* is rather an offensive comment on women at large, however true it is. Do not be mislead by the peripheral fascination of a woman. The external striking veil conceals the deplorable stuff inside. They enchain and land men in desolation. Transfer yourself by singing the glory of God.

Chakkani rāja mār gamu : Kharaharapriya

The pre-eminent qualities of Thyāgarāja as a *vāggeyakāra* are evincible in this *kriti*. Every detail as well as the overall structure has been given meticulous attention.



One of the prominent *mēla rāga*-s has been given the utmost care and scrutiny. Step by step, the *rāga* has been built up and the eventual canvas is complete, vivid and eloquent. With stately gait and minimum of syllables in each cycle of *tāla*, the structure provides endless opportunities to frame *sangati*-s. Compare the commencing *swara*-s, *ri ga ri* of

the *pallavi*, with *swara*-s, *dha ni dha* of *anupallavi*, and the excellent integration thereof.

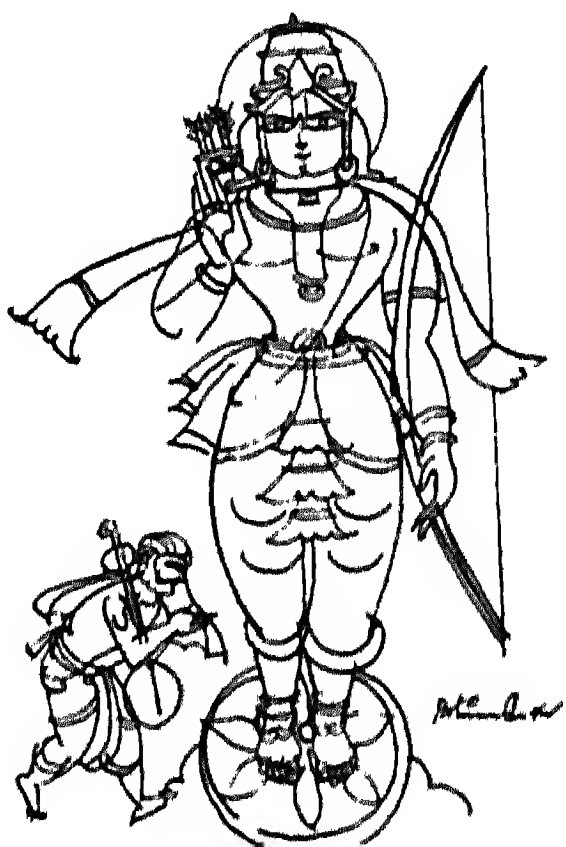
Entarāni tanakenta pōni : Harikāmbhōji

The *kriti* gives a grand spectrum of the *rāga* in the higher octave, which it is confined to. A majority of his *kriti*-s in the *rāga* commences below *panchama*. It is interesting to note that a few of his compositions in similar format resemble one another, e.g. *ēlāvatāramettu kontivō* (*mukhāri*), *evarikai avatāramettitivō* (*dēvamanōhari*). These are *kriti*-s, which build up the initial tempo in a concert and are welcome in the

early stages of a concert. The *rāga bhāva* is well brought out and the emotive power of the *sāhitya* is impressive. Beautiful illustrations from the epic are quoted to justify how one has to wait for the grace of the Almighty and not just expect immediate results. The *kriti* is set to *vilambakāla* and the opportunity to highlight *sruti* content is rich at the resting *swara-s*, particularly *tāra shadja*. The *charana-s* are ideally suited for *nēraaval*; the *eduppu* of the *kriti* is a point to be noted.

Lakshanamugala rāmuniki : Shudha sāvēri

Shudha sāvēri is a *ranjaka rāga* and there are many attractive *kriti-s* in the *rāga*. The present one is however a slow moving one with all the



lakshya and *lakshana-s* of the *rāga*. The prosody in construction is very attractive. Watch the usage of the word *lakshana* and its rational deviations. Making 32 *pradakshana-s* to Śrī Rāma is considered to be auspicious. Only those who are conversant with *vēda-s* can realize his *swarūpa*. He is the cherished friend of those who contemplate

and sing His praise. The *kriti* can be made a major item in a concert with good scope for *nēraaval* and *swarakalpana*.

Lāli lāliyani : Harikāmbhōji / Kamās

Thyāgarāja has composed a couple of songs as lullaby. He assumes the role of a sentinel and protector and treats the Lord as a baby; a unique form of devotion, with deep affection, he puts him in a cradle and rocks him. While hailing Him, he feasts his eyes. The devotion is clear when he says, "While rocking You, I chant Rāmanāma." The *kriti* is set to *harikāmbhōji*, but *kamas* also goes well. The four *charana-s* sound exceedingly well with lilting rhythm. The song if rendered in *rāga kamās* can take the end phase of concert, followed by a *javali* or *tillana*.

Brōchē vārevarē : Śrīranjani

The song is essentially an attempt to portray the *rāga bhāva* in a simple way confining to the middle octave. A combination of the *pallavi* set to even *kālapramāna* and the *charana* to *madhyamakāla* gives a very enjoyable balance to the construction. The repetition of the *pallavi* at regular intervals after each *charana* does not give room for monotony because the *kriti* is woven around a story, as it were, of several illustrations from the epic. *Swarakalpana* at the commencement of the *pallavi* will prove decorative, but there is no room for *nēraaval*.

Vināyakuni valenu : Madhyamāvati



One of the rare *kriti-s* of Thyāgarāja where he has devotedly addressed *Kāmakshi*, as sister of Viśhnu in the phrase *Kanchipurādhināyaki*. The *kriti* has instant impact as it commences at the higher octave and takes a rapid sweep of the *rāga* in almost the entire cycle. The tribute, *anātarakshaki śrī kāmakshi*, reiterates the request with equal eloquence and the appeal, “Protect me as You would

Your son Vināyaka”, gets firmly registered. There is no other way of effective and forceful appeal. How can the Goddess reject it?

Bhavanuta : Mōhana

The impressive feature in this *kriti* is essentially the rhythm, which is highlighted by the *chatusra nadai* throughout. The song is set to *madhyamakāla* (medium tempo). The ingenuity lies in the skill that even though the same rhythm is consistent right through, it does not give any room for boredom. The change in octave again is confined to the *ādhāra shadja* in the beginning and later to the *samvādi swara panchama*. The construction is simple and can easily be learnt by an average singer or even a beginner, essentially because the technique is based on the use of

janta swara-s. For instance, the notation in the *pallavi*, *ss rr s r g p g r s d d r r d s*, is almost similar to the popular *varnam*, *ninnu kōri* of Rāmnād Śrīnivasa Iyengar in *mōhana*. There is very little *gamaka* and therefore the song can be notated without any effort. The melodic elements may not be rich but it is made good by the rhythm. The plaintive pleading is adequately and effectively conveyed in all humility.

Hechcharikagā rāra : Yadukulakāmbhōji

Both the *rāga bhāva* and rhythmic grace form the essence of the composition. The lyric is charming at one moment, titillating at another, sublime at one moment and divine at another, but delightful right through. In inviting the Lord, Thyāgarāja seems to have prepared the



ground with a fascinating array of arrangements. He has decorated Śrī Rāma in his own right, as glorious as he can imagine. In keeping with rhythm built into the *kṛiti*, the Saint has framed the *sāhitya*, “With Your golden crown shedding radiance, the pendants from Your ears oscillating and jingles round your feet twinkling, come, come and seat yourself amidst the glorious music of

vīna.” The entire scenario gives the picture of divine dancing. If presented in the spirit and intention as designed by Thyāgarāja, listeners will begin to dance, as it were! It is a delightful piece that can be accommodated at the end phase of a concert. Nothing in the form of *nēraṇal* and *swarakalpana* need be added. *Khanda chāpu tāla* in situations like this, tickles the performer as well as the listener.

Mānamu lēda : Hamīrkalyāṇi

“Have You any self respect?” How does Thyāgarāja make such a cutting remark? Is it not a rude approach? Perhaps his intimacy and sanctioned liberty with the Lord have given him that courage. He further justifies his remarks, “When Sugrīva speaks to You in taunting words,

You with a sense of wounded pride, made him a king.” Thyāgarāja means that because he is just a lover of music, and nothing more, he is ignored. Watch the pun on words ‘*mānamu*’ and ‘*abhimānamu*’. The only other *kriti*-s in this *rāga* is *nī dāsanu dāsudanani*. The skill of the Saint in bringing out the essence of the *rāga* is outstanding.

Sogasu jūda taramā: Kannadagaula

The *rāga kannadagaula* has an immediate impact. The stress on the swara, *ga* in the *ārohana sa ga ga ma pa ni sa* and the swara, *ni* in the *avarohana sa ni ni dha ma pa ma ga sa* is the reason for that. It has a touch of taunting too; it may even have shade of mockery. The liberty



Thyāgarāja takes to do this is similarly seen in the other *kriti*, *ōrajūpu jūchēdi nyāyama*, more or less in the same frame of mind. This emotion is mainly produced by the unique *prayōga* in the *rāga*. Although the *ārohana* is *sampūrna*, the deletion of the swara-s *dhaivata* and *rishabha* in the *avarohana* creates romantic combination, like *ri ga ma pa, ma ga sa, ni sa ri dha pa*. Added

is the free use of *janta swara*-s like *ni ni ma ma*, gives further beauty to the decoration. The sparkling shades of the *rāga* appear at established and regular intervals. Thyāgarāja gives a graphic description of the handsome personality of Rāma combined with a deep sense of spirituality, which in turn gives an idea of Thyāgarāja's sense of aesthetics. The description is classic. The item gets in well at any stage of the concert.

Vandanamu raghunandana : Sahāna

The song is known for its lyrical excellence. The choice of words, their adroit and masterly combinations, the rhythm and thrill thereof, not to mention the *rāga bhāva* therein, all make the *kriti* one of the finest in the *rāga*. The composer has confined predominantly to the middle octave

but yet the external architecture and interior decoration of the *kṛitī* outshine. Note the starting *swara*, *rishabha* and the mandatory extension of the note with appropriate *gamaka*. There are nine *charana*-s in all, and each is a jewel in its own merit. There may be repetition of a constant rhythm but there is no tedium. In repeated but polite interrogations, the Saint asks the Lord why is he not responding?

Śāntamu lēka : Sāma

A great truth realised after great experience and stated in simple terms. It is presumed that by the time this *kṛitī* was thought of, Thyāgarāja must have gone through the ups and downs of life. This evidently is what life



has taught him “Without serenity, there is no happiness. Though one may have wife and sons, wealth and plenty of gains (based on observation) always engaged in prayer and austerities (of self) and even acquire a fortune, without serenity, there is no happiness. You might perform all the rituals and sacrifices, you may be able to read people's mind very well, but without serenity, there is no

happiness.” This romantic *rāga* has its impact because of the omission of the *swara*, *nishāda* in the cycle. *Rishabha* and *dhaivata* play a major role in the melody. Watch the commencing *swara* in the *charana*; the *rāga lakshana* immediately shows up. The choice of the *rāga* is even more meaningful in terms of the feeling (*rasa*) with which the truth is stated.

Sītānima māyamma : Lalita

At some point of time, Thyāgarāja seems to have found himself insecure. Why else is he claiming Rāma and Sītā as his parents and other deities as his close relatives? In his list, he has not omitted any. The list is Bharata, Paramaśiva, Vashishta, Parāśara, Nārada, Sanaka, Ānjanēya, Lakshmana, Garuda, Shatrugna, Jāmbhavan, Suka, Indra, Gautama, Ganēśa, Subrahmanya and all other devotees. It looks as though in his

right and assertions, others have no claim. The song sounds like an invocation and stays in the middle octave right through. The *rāga lakshana* is clear and vivid.

Samayamu telisi: Asāvēri

This is an excellent *kriti* in the *rāga*. The *bhava*, the philosophy and universal truth are depicted with simple but impressive examples. The *kriti* can be considered as an important item in the concert. The place for *nēraaval* may not be ideal but *swarakalpana* in the *pallavi* makes an impact. “Of what use is wealth unless it is given as charity to appropriate persons? Of what use is awe-inspiring poetry for a lunatic? It makes no meaning if a blind person opens his eyes wide. A wealthy person is as good as corpse if he does not indulge in charity; at the end he will end up as a ghost. Similarly music without devotion is a fruitless exercise.”

Ēmi jēsītēnēmi : Tōdi

Compositions in *tōdi* commencing at *dhaivata* have a special impact. They immediately generate a feeling of rest and repose, a sense of relaxation just suited to speak. Thyāgarāja has hit upon this state to make the point that unless there is the grace of God, whatever a mortal does, will eventually prove futile. The greed for material and sensual pleasure is what humans wittingly or unwittingly pursue. The way he has condemned this evil in man is noteworthy. The composition is ideally constructed for display of *manodharma sangīta*. There are many places in the structure where *nēraaval* and *swarakalpana* can be attempted successfully. The song can be a major item in a concert, providing opportunity for the percussion accompanists to display their prowess.

Śōbhāne : Pantuvarāli

Thyāgarāja has projected a fresh face of the *rāga*, *pantuvarāli*. Right through, the *dhaivata* with accentuated *gamaka* is highlighted and *nishāda* concealed or even blinded to some extent. The *bhāva* is immense and the *sangati* often repeated. The pace is regular and confirmed. The composition is an *utsava sampradāya kīrtana* and is therefore confined to a fixed space in the middle octave making it convenient for group singing, a *nāma sankīrtana*.

Ūrake galgunā : Sahāna

One cannot enunciate better, the philosophy contained in this *kṛiti*. Apart from the lyrical beauty, the artistry in the construction, the mood, the royal rhythm, above all the versatility of the *rāga*, the message is unbeatable. “How can devotion spring from indulging in sensual life, wealth, pomp, and the like? It is service to man of sterling character that is ideal and it is in the following of these ideals that one can guide the other. Sham, hypocritical worship can never help.” The unique *rāga* with its slow and meandering movements, a variety of *gamaka-s* not to mention the use of *janta swara-s*, the *tristayi* advantage of the melody, all contribute to the outcome and intention of the great Saint.

Nidhi chāla sukhamā : Kalyāṇi

The *kṛiti* brings out Thyāgarāja’s firm belief in *vairāgya*, perhaps even without enjoying the pleasure of materialism. It will be interesting to find out at what age and under what circumstances this song was composed. May be it has something to do with the wealth that King Sarabhōja

offered him, which he politely refused to accept although he was in dire poverty; what determination and will power! The *kṛiti* is not a prayer but profound universal truth. There are equally powerful similes that are coined in the *kṛiti*. “Which is more delicious, milk, butter and curd or the nectar of worship? Which is happier – the control of senses comparable to a bath in the Ganges or a bath in



a dirty well? Which gives more happiness – flattery of men or singing of the Lord?” He not only preached but also practised in word and spirit. And now the *rāga*, the song starts with the *jīva swara*, *antara gāndhāra* and leaps over to *dhaivata* and combines with *panchama* producing a stunning effect. The song soaks with the *rāga lakshana*.

Nāradamuni vedalina : Pantuvarāli

This song is rendered in two ways: wrongly in *rūpaka* and rightly in *tisra nadai ādi*. Perhaps the most accepted is the former *tāla*. *Pantuvarāli* has immediate impact if the *rāga* is started at or beyond *panchama* unlike the *pūrvikalyāni*, which has similar impact if commenced at *ādhāra shadja* or *antara gāndhāra*. A majority of *vāggeyakāra* has followed this principle. This is particularly evident in the designs of the Saint's compositions. The song, which commences at *tāra shadja*, hovers around the same *swara* all through and thus maintains the tenor and tempo of the song in full strength. The opportunity for the singer to align with the *sruti* is unbounded. In its content, it is not so much addressed to the Lord, as it is a



valediction to humanity at large. Quoting some events of the epic, his advice is “in this world success comes to those who listen to the subtle doctrine and glory of the Lord.” The item is well suited as a tempo building event in a concert and provides enough opportunity for *manodharma sangīta*.

Ēlāvatāramettu kontivō : Mukhāri

This *kriti* is an interrogation by Thyāgarāja, where he confidently assumes that the Lord has taken the *avatāra* of Rāma to protect the composer of no less than *sata rāga ratnamālika*. In stating this there is some element of ethical self, if not alter ego. The *kriti* is in *mukhāri*, which is particularly significant of *bhakti*. The distinctive phrase, *ni dha pa dha sa* is seen at the very commencement of the *kriti* in the *pallavi*. The other equally significant *prayōga*, *ni dha pa* is cleverly woven in the corresponding place in the *charana*. The *kriti* is set to *vilambakāla* which brings out the grandiose in the movement. The *rāga bhāva* is overflowing in the entire *kriti* with captivating *gamaka-s*.

Rāmābhirāma rāmanīya nāma : Darbār

The *kriti* is an excellent example of lyrical, melodic and rhythmic beauty. The stately movement is stupefying; it sounds like a royal darbar. The usage of the *swara* combination ***ri ma pa dha ni*** is highlighted. Compare the commencement of the *pallavi* with the corresponding phrase of *anupallavi*; the coordination is fantastic. Care is taken to bring out the difference from *rāga*, *nāyaki*. The words and phrases in the lyric is a “perfumed tincture of the roses.” The most hardhearted must melt. Such is the appeal of the Saint. “You have no sign of mercy, what is the use of arguing with You?” There is no apt translation for the statement, *Nīkē dayabutti nīvē brōvavale*.

Nannu vidachi : Rītigaula

The lyric, the choice of the *rāga*, the *kālapramāna* all give a glorious vision of the craftsmanship and scholarship of Thyāgarāja. The appeal



emanates from the heart in earnestness and devotion. The repetition of the name of the Lord in different emotions is a point to be noted. *rītigaula*, a close associate of *ānandabhairavi*, is identified by the singularity in the liberal *prayōga* of the *swara nishāda*. Whereas the use of this *swara* in *ānandabhairavi* is a “touch and go” exercise, the same *swara* in *rītigaula* is evergreen,

persistent and dominant, although the rest of the *swara-s* in the cycle are similar in the *rāga-s*. There is no scope, and rightly so, for elaboration of the *sāhitya* in extended *sangati-s*.

Manasulōni marmamulu : Hindōla

In this short *kriti*, Thyāgarāja has expounded the complete image of the *rāga* in all its colours. Watch the commencing *swara-s*, ***ma ga sa ma, ga ma*** and compare them with those of the *anupallavi*, ***dha dha ni dha, ni dha***. The equation that is produced is amazingly balanced. The

bhāva moves the listener effectively. The message is one of introspection of sorts, “Be aware of the (evil) desires of mind” followed by a fervent appeal. “Grace me when I need You most.”

Vidulaku mrokkēda : Māyāmālavagaula

A majority of the songs in the *rāga* commences at the *ādhāra shadja* and certainly below *panchama*; the mindset is such. Being a *tristayi* and



sarvakalina rāga, Purandaradāsa has rightly chosen it to initiate the basics in Carnātic music. The *kriti* is almost like an invocation. He pays obeisance to those well versed in music, those who are proficient in *sāma vēda*, those who have realised the emanations of the *sapta swara-s* and a host of other sages. He also taught people who know the value of *brahmānanda*. In short, the value

he attaches to music, as a means of devotion is evident in the recitation of the *kriti*.

Nī bhajana gāna : Nāyaki

Note the *swara* with which the *kriti* starts. *Nishāda* with its extended vowel in conjunction with *dhaivata* is the identifying *lakshana* of the *rāga*. Thyāgarāja has fully explained this feature at the very commencement of the *kriti*, thus distinguishing it from the close *rāga darbār*; and also, in the *anupallavi*. The *rāga lakshana* is freely flowing right through the song in right *kālapramāna*. Thyāgarāja is overwhelmed with the thrill of music that he wants to associate himself with those equally interested in the art. “Tell me O Lord, where can I come across *rasikas* who involve themselves heart and soul in singing Your glory.” It is in vain he adds, “to explore fully the *suguna mārga* and *nirguna mārga*, truth and falsehood, the six schools of Hindu philosophy and eight *siddhi-s*.”

Kshīnamai tiruga : Mukhāri

“Mere study of literature, poetry and scriptures, recital of *vēda-s*, performance of sacrifices and *japa* yield fruits which are only transient. What is needed is dedicated worship”, says Thyāgarāja. In doing this, he has exposed a fresh face of the *rāga*. The *swara* combination, *ni dha pa* and *pa dha sa* are refreshingly adopted and are well highlighted in coining the beautiful lyrics.

Śōbhīllu saptaswara : Jaganmōhini

Thyāgarāja cannot refrain from repeatedly heralding the grandeur of



Carnātic music, its means to an end as prayer, its grammar and the involved intricacies. He refers to the beautiful shapes of the shining seven notes, their centres of origin, from the navel, the heart, the throat, the tongue, the nose and other centres, and the role these *swara-s* play in the recitals of the three *vēda-s* and the great mantra of *Gāyatri*. The *antara*

gāndhāra in the *ārohana* and the *shudha rishabha* in the *avarohana* contribute a unique melody. Watch the usage of the *swara-s* in the *charana*; it brings out the essence of the *rāga*.

Tulasidalamulachē : Māyāmālavagaula

Māyāmālavagaula is a versatile *tristayi rāga* and can give rise to innumerable *janya rāga-s*. It is perhaps for this reason that Purandaradāsa has chosen this to teach the fundamentals of Carnātic music. The combination of *shadja* with *rishabha*, *gāndhāra* with *madhyama*, *panchama* with *dhaivata*, *nishāda* with *shadja* along with the perfect balance of the *pūrvānga* with the *uttarānga* makes the *rāga* simple but yet complete. The composition is sedate, serene and conveys the *bhakti* in offering prayer. The incidents related in the context are richly ornamental. The analogy that when Lord Krishna was weighed in

a balance in gold and other ornaments, only a tender *tulasi* leaf could counterbalance it; this is dramatic. The *kriti* fits in well in the early stages of the concert, say the second or third item and is open for elaborate *nēraṇal* and *swarakalpana* in myriad patterns. It is a tempo building item in a concert.

Ō rajīvāksha: Ārabhi

Apparently Thyāgarāja likes the *rāga*, *ārabhi* and has composed quite a number of songs in the *rāga*. For a moment, it is worthwhile comparing this composition with the *pancharathna*. If the latter is an



exercise in grammar and construction in its purest form, with a profound sense of self-consciousness, the present *kriti* is one with spiritual ecstasy a heartrending appeal vivid with emotional intensity filled with fervent moments of joy and bliss. The *miśra chāpu tāla* is ideally suited to do the function. The song has three long *charana*-s. "Am I a stranger to

you, O Lord with eyes as big as lotus? I am innocent but accused unjustly; I am lonely with none to protect me. Caught in the deceptive ways of this life, I might have lost the balance and might have erred. Believe me O Lord, I trust you completely; do not forget me", says Thyāgarāja. The *kriti* can take any place in a concert but if followed by *rāga*, *kalyāṇi*, the pair would be an ideal setting.

Nenendu vetukudura : Karnātakabehag / Harikāmbhōji

This *kriti* calls for some introspection. This is his only composition in the *rāga*. Why has he chosen this *rāga*? And why has he chosen Hari in place of Rāma? The context is the loss of the image stolen from his prayer room. There is profound grief. He could not have chosen a more effective *rāga* to put forth his sorrow. He has virtually lost Rāma although in the form of an image and therefore he has to appeal to

somebody to retrieve the image and the one who comes to the mind is Hari. In the process, he attributes to himself the base characters, that his mind has sinister intentions, indulged in vulgar talks, and perpetrated numerous despicable acts. This self-pity is born out of the fact that 'result is an effect of a cause' and in the present case, it may be so where he has unwittingly committed them. Care should be exercised in choosing the time and place for this song in a concert.

Nāda sudhā rasambilanu : Ārabhi

In more or less the same mind-set as in *nādalōludai*, Thyāgarāja has conveyed similar message in this *kṛiti*. The *rāga* is ideally set for

madhyamakāla sanchāra. The *swara-s dhaivata* and *rishabha* are dominant and provide the opportunity for the usage of *janta* and *dhātu swara-s*. He again refers to the seven musical notes. The simile is remarkable. "The seven musical notes constitute the dulcet jingles. The three gaits *ghana*, *naya* and *dēśya* of *rāga* singing, constitute the strings of the bow. The



myriad rhythmic gaits have become the numerous arrows forming the juicy interpretations of the *rāga* nuances and the *sangati-s* thereof. He is aware of this and thanks the Lord for the gift.

Pakkala nilabadi : Kharaharapriya

This is one of the most inspiring compositions in the *rāga*. The *rāga* at every stanza in the *kṛiti* has a glorious spectrum. Every *sangati* or even a fraction of it glows with eloquence and beauty and nothing more need be added. With the grace and elegance of rhythm in the form of *miśra chāpu tāla*, the entire structure is stunning. In his description, Thyāgarāja seems to be jealous of both Sīta and Lakshmana for having won the clemency of the Lord, just by standing by His side. He wants to know the secret so that he can follow that path.

Rāmābhirāma : Dhanyāsi

The *kṛiti* is framed to tap three octaves of the melody and the *rāga bhāva* flows eloquently. The *mūrchanā* is evident in the *pallavi* and the canvas of the *rāga* is well spread. The movement is slow and conveys the sentiment adequately. While the Saints's cravings are evident in the lyric, the description of Sīta (Jānaki) is picturesque. She is wearing various kinds of jewels and flowers, expressing intense devotion to the Lord. At the same time, the Saint unwittingly refers to his own proficiency in music. He presents the song in a befitting way. The artist must possess expert command; the depth in presentation is crucial. Preceded by a full *ālāpana* and imaginative *swarakalpana* to go with the *pallavi*, the piece will add dignity to a concert. If this *kṛiti* is followed by one in *prati madhyama* and/or *antara gāndhāra*, the concert gains weight.

Dāsarathi nī runamu : Tōdi

The *kṛiti* commencing with *ādhāra shadja* introduces both the depth in the *rāga* and the impact of the lyrics. In combination with the other predominant note, the *panchama*, the fact is conveyed how, even without



the use of the other dominant *swara-s*, the *rāga*, *tōdi* can be portrayed effectively. Only two *swara-s*, *shadja* and *panchama* play the major role. The *swara-s* in the scale of the *rāga* are all *shudha swara-s* exactly opposite to that of *kalyāni*. Even within the scale, one should note that the *jīva swara*, *gāndhāra* has a slightly higher frequency in the *ārohana* than that in the *avarohana*. The

song is set at the right pace, neither too slow nor too fast. The truth that the gift of composing or singing is useless unless it is pregnant with *bhakti* is adequately conveyed. There may not be a suitable phrase to choose for *nēraṇal*, but the commencing name *Dāsarathi* is suited well enough besides providing an opportunity for *nāma sankīrtana*.

Koluvaiyunnāde : Bhairavi

Kriti-s in the *bhāshānga rāga bhairavi* are generally set to *vilambakāla* essentially because the *rāga* is richly laden with *gamaka*. The *rāga* occupies the pride of place in Carnātic music because of its melodic content and plasticity, be it in the form of *janta*, *dhīrga* or *dhātu swara-s*. Thyāgarāja has composed a number of *kriti-s* in the *rāga* but each has a special motive both in content and construction. The highlight of this *kriti* is classicism where he has chosen a unique *kālapramāna* neither too slow nor too fast. The singer can always be at ease, as also the percussion player. The *sāhitya* is more poetic than musical and is essentially a description of Śrī Rāma and his great qualities. In its importance, it may not match with many of his other compositions in the *rāga*, but one can find a respectable place in a concert and can lead to more impressive items.

Ēla nī dayarādu : Atāna

By and large, most of the *kriti-s* in *atāna* commence in the *tāra stāyi*.



The compositions of Thyāgarāja are no exception. The spirit behind this is the firepower of the *rāga*. Right through the song, the tempo is maintained at the *tāra stāyi*. With glorious compliments to the Lord, Thyāgarāja forcefully questions with no compunctions, “O Lord, why does Your grace elude me? Is not this the right moment to protect me?” Examine the lyrical beauty in all the three

charana-s; every commencing letter in every line has an elongated vowel. In turn, listen to the rhythmic impact in the general movement. The *pallavi* is on the beat but the rest of the *kriti* are two *swara-s* off beat, which exquisitely embellishes the beauty of the lyrical construction. The *sollu* is consistently maintained as, *dhim ta dhim ta taka*. The change over to the *pallavi* from the *charana* each time, to the *sarwalaghu nadai* is a marvel. This *kriti* is complete in all respect.

Etula brōtuvō teliya : Chakravakam

The interesting part of the *kriti* is the intriguing *sāhitya*. Thyāgarāja alludes to his misdeeds, which he indulged in, in flattering the rich misers, that he associated himself with wicked men, committed despicable acts and became notorious. It is intriguing why he attributes these base qualities to himself, while all his life; he has been a Saint. By such assumptions, he even curses himself and exonerates the Lord for His inability to save him. To convey this *karuna rasa*, he has chosen the right *rāga* and brings out an excellent spectrum of the *rāga*.

Mariyāda gādayya : Bhairavam

The choice of the *rāga* is unique. A derivative of the *mēla sūryakantam*, the *rāga* has some *swara-s* extended in usage, like *dhaivata*, *madhyama* and they are designed to be used as such. The skill of composing this song with such usage in-built into the *kriti* is remarkable. In the construction, these *swara-s* are elongated at regular intervals till the *āvarta* in the cycle of the *tāla* is complete. It also requires the deft use of the *swara dhaivata*. The lyric is a common theme of a *bhakta*.

Manavinālgincha: Nalinakānti

This is the only song of Thyāgarāja in this *rāga*. The *rāga* being *vakra shādava* in *ārohana* produces scintillating effects in the *prayōga* of *dhātu swara-s*. The relationship of the *swara-s gāndhāra* and *nishāda*, being very animated, *swarakalpana* gives a glorious glitter. The *jāru gamaka* facilitates *suka* (pleasure) and through that means, the melody gets decorated. A point to note; many mispronounce the starting word; it is not *manavyalakinchā*; it is *manavinālagincha*. If followed by a *rāga* like *dhanyāsi*, the format would be pleasing. Watch the *anupallavi*, *ghanidaina śrī rāmachandrūni*; and if sung with feeling, the audience can be hypnotized. The lyric, in essence, is a statement of astuteness. “Men, influenced by greed and selfishness, indulge in *vedic* rituals. They are involved helplessly in the cycle of birth and death. With the intention of how to extricate oneself from this ritual, Rāma took the *avatāra* of a human being.”

Enduku daya rādu : Tōdi

The structure and presentation of this song is almost like the *kriti*, *ēmi jēsītēnēmi*, but the theme is different. It is a respectful and polite appeal for grace. Thyāgarāja, in a way, pardons the Lord under the excuse that he might not find appropriate time to devote His attention towards the *bhakta*. The *kriti* meanders predominantly in the field of lower and middle octave providing effortless movement for the singer.

Mōkshamu galadā : Sāramati

The immediate power and pleasure of music and that of *vīna*, in



particular, is conveyed in this *kriti*. Thyāgarāja has placed the art music form at the highest altar and believes that this is the most powerful means of attaining *mōksha*. The *rāga* is full of tranquillity. Note the repeated usage of the *swara-s*, *sa ri ga , sa ri ga ma pa* which is characteristic of the *rāga*. What one should notice is the usage of the allied *rāga-s* and

why the particular *rāga* in this group is chosen for a particular song.

Rāma bāna trāna: Sāvēri

There are conflicting opinions about the utilisation of *sruti-s* (frequencies) of the two *swara-s*, *gāndhāra* and *nishāda* in the *rāga*. Ancient records reveal that three different frequencies are applied for these notes in different contexts. In recent times, however, it is established that only *antara gāndhāra* and *kākali nishāda* must be used and only in exceptional cases, the corresponding lower *sruti-s* must be applied. The *rāga* is ideally suited to express *karunā rasa* and is in slow tempo. The deletion in the *ārohana* of the *swara-s*, *gāndhāra* and *nishāda* produces an electrifying effect. "How can I extol the power and valour of Rāma's arrow which destroyed mighty Ravana, who was casting lustful glances at Sīta." says Thyāgarāja. During the fight with

Rāvana, Lakshmana collapsed with fatigue. It was Rāvana who rejoiced at this and indeed distributed sweets. It was Indrajit who advised to utilise the opportunity to attack the foe. Soon Lakshmana got up and destroyed the *rākshasas*.

Śrī rāma jayarāma : Yadukulakāmbhōji

This again is a *divyanāma sankīrtana* and ideally suited to group singing, in praise of the Lord. The song is set to single octave. The innovative usage of the *jīva swara*, *madhyama* in myriad combinations



with *rishabha* and *panchama*, *sa ri ma ma, ri ma pa dha dha, pa dha sa pa* produces attractive feelings. The *kriti* is slow moving and meant to be so. The *sāhitya* is mainly in praise of the Lord in glorious references, liked and admired by the great, Kausalya, Dasaratha, Lakshmana, Janaka, Viswāmitra Jānaki, Nārada and almost everybody in the epic. The *kriti*

is particularly significant of the *rāga bhāva* it has divinities.

Lāvanya rāma : Pūrnashadja

The fantasy of the *rāga* lies in the tactical omission of the *swara*, *panchama* in the *ārohana* not to mention its inclusion in the *avarohana*. A strange dreaminess is elicited with the change over from *madhyama* to *nishāda* in the *ārohana* and it is further enhanced when the same *panchama* is included in the *avarohana*. The total omission of *dhaivata*, further contributes a welcome vacuum. Watch the commencing *swara-s* in the *anupallavi* and the shrewd usage of the *swarākshara ni*. In choosing the *rāga*, Thyāgarāja has created a unique ecstasy in describing the charm of the Lord and adds that a hundred *manmata-s* (beauty God, Cupid) put together does not match this beauty. In describing His charm, he also attributes the great qualities of compassion, divinity, which blossomed the heart of Sīta.

Rāmā nīyeda : Kharaharapriya

Comparatively a sedate song, which conveys tributes to the Lord and His greatness. The *swara-s*, *ni dha pa ma ga ri sa* in the *rāga* cover the major spectrum. The story is simple, “Do people without love for You, know the flavour of Your name?” To be more certain, Thyāgarāja illustrates a few similes. “Can a man in the garb of a woman understand the behaviour of a faithful woman? Can a tiger in the cloak of a cow yield milk for a baby?”

Venkatēsa ninnu : Madhyamāvatī

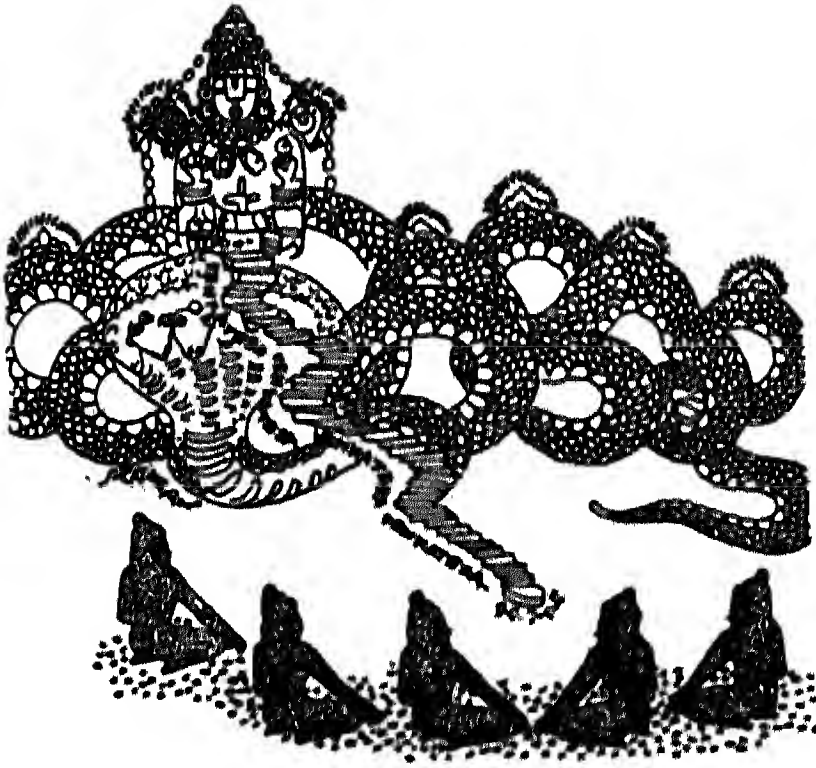
The *kriti* is dominantly confined to the higher octave and the Saint fervently pleads in that state of mind with implicit faith and complete

surrender. In being delighted at the sight of Lord Venkatēsa, he says that a thousand eyes are not enough to rejoice the *swarūpa* of the Lord. Overwhelmed with ecstasy, he almost yells with pleasure. Note the commencing *stāyi* of the *anupallavi*, *pankajāksha paripālita munijana*. The spectrum of the *rāga* in all its glory, particularly at the *tāra stāyi* is well depicted. Although

madhyamāvatī is generally restricted to the final stage of a concert, this song in particular, can take any slot of a concert.

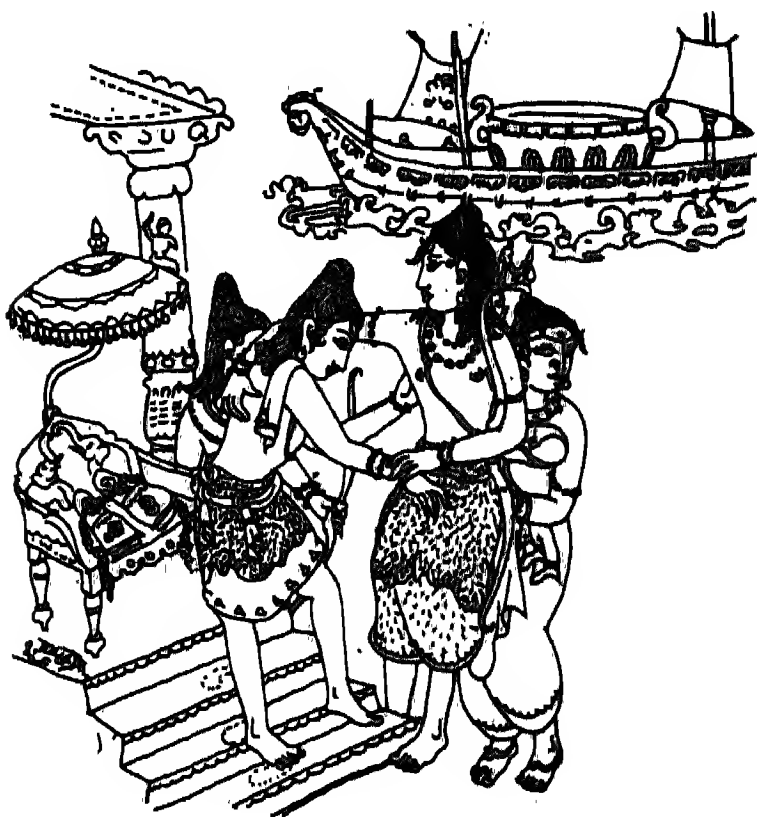
Ōrajūpu jūchēdi nyāyamā : Kannadagaula

There are very few songs in this raga. This *kriti* is a magnum opus and ideally suited to be introduced in the earlier stages of the concert. Brisk, *madhyamakāla swarakalpana* will build up the tempo and the teamwork will be exciting. The item is also well suited to warm up in case it is followed by a great *rāga* like *tōdi*. *Dīna* (kindness) and *karuna* (compassion) *rasā-s* are principal emotions. The composer’s appeal is touching, “I am disturbed in your tortuous and derogatory attention towards me. Why this disregard? Judge yourself if you have been acting



fair. Are you not obliged to consider at least those who trust you? You are the compendium of all virtues; you are the only hope for the struggling mortals." Thyāgarāja is always mindful of music and on this occasion again he, calls him "O, Lover of music".

Rāmakathā sudhā : Madhyamāvatī



The *kriti* starts in a state of peace and tranquillity. The *anupallavi* brings out the essence of the *rāga*. The stride of the song is dignified which induces sobriety to the percussion. Unwittingly the teamwork in a concert affects an enforced discipline. The overall effect is mesmerising. The epistle is for the listener extolling the great story of

Rāma. The experience will bestow on humanity the four blessings, *dharma*, *artha*, *kāma*, *mōksha*. The story of Rāma is a saga of courage, valour, ideal conduct, bliss and peace.

Ēti janmamidi hā : Varāli

Thyāgarāja curses his own life and laments as to why it fell to his lot to be born as a human being. The choice of the *rāga* is again ideally suited to convey pathos, grief and sorrow. The structure of the *kriti*, the pace, the diction, the feeling and the movement are all almost similar to the *kriti*, *etula brōtuvō teliya* in *chakravākam*. The grief is immense in the *anupallavi* where he also brings out the *rāga bhāva* with tremendous impact. Watch the usage of the *swara*, *gāndhāra*. The shrewd diction of the lower octave, particularly *ādhāra shadja* is a point to be noted. Perhaps the pathos may prove ineffective in the *mandara stāyi*. The *chandas*, a feature of grammar, is cleverly woven in the *charana*-s. The entire *kriti* rests on *tāra shadja* and meanders around touching the *gāndhāra* and *rishabha* at right moments. The *miśra chāpu tāla* adds dignity to the song.

Manasu svādhīnamaina : Śankarābharana

Through this great composition, Thyāgarāja has stated most effectively and cogently a philosophical truth. Both the lyric and the music are lucid, eloquent and vivid. “For one who has the control of the mind, there is no need for *mantra-s* or *tantra-s*. Where is the need for *tapas* for one who has realised that body and soul are different? For one who is free from vicious enjoyments, where is the worry? Will one who considers the whole universe as ‘*maya*’ be deluded by the charm of woman?” The *rāga* has in-built *vishrānti* and is well suited to convey the meaning. The truth is evidently borne out of constant prayer. The stress of important letters in the *sāhitya* is denoted by the *aridi* in the *miśra chāpu tāla*.

Entavēdukondurāghava : Saraswatimanōhari

By and large, there are very few *kriti-s* in this *rāga*. The highlight of this *rāga* is in the presentation of the limited field of the *rāga* and yet show within that field, the excellence of the melody that can be brought out. Watch the commencement and the striking usage of the phrase, ***ma dha sa***. Listen to where *anupallavi* starts; it is captivating. A tricky *rāga* that needs expertise to deal with. This *kriti* can be included at any place or time in a concert. In content, Thyāgarāja's interrogation is in a way authoritative, yet playful. To sing *swarakalpana* for this needs confidence but if done well, can prove very impressive.

Mākēlara vichāramu : Ravichandrika

There are only a few compositions in the *raga*. The significant fact is that the note *panchama* is deleted in both *ārohana* and *avarohana*. In *rāga-s* where the note *panchama* is deleted, the preceding *swara*, *madhyama* gains importance and therefore plays a major role. For instance watch the *prayōga-s*, ***ma ni dha***, or ***ma dha ni dha sa***. The note *nishāda* has an extended vowel. In the *kriti*, Thyāgarāja enunciates a philosophy of sorts and comments, “when You control the strings of this world, which, in fact is a stage, and direct the various functions with smartness, what are we, mortals.” The song can be accommodated in the early stages of the concert and *swarakalpana* will go well with the *pallavi*; a good item to build the tempo.

Vinatā suta vāhana : Jayantasēna

The *rāga* is tricky in the sense that there is deletion of *rishabha* and *nishāda* in the *ārohana*, while in the *avarohana* only *rishabha* is deleted. The cycle, therefore, imposes odd construction of a *kriti*. There is an element of humour, as it were. The song is more in tune with the rhythm than any sense of melody. The *sollu, thaka dhim thaka dhim*, goes on repeating. Thyāgarāja must have had some experience of sorts if he should comment, “What is the use of indulging in fruitless arguments with confirmed atheists? Their company should be avoided scrupulously. Only association with the pious and the righteous can lead to happiness.”

Sambhō mahādēva : Pantuvarāi

Thyāgarāja has composed only a few *Siva stutis* and this is one of them. This *kriti* is in Sanskrit, which is a deviation from the normal approach. The content is simple obeisance. *Rāga, pantuvarāli* shows us its picture only when it commences at or beyond the *swara, panchama* in the scale, be it *ālāpana* or *kriti*. Most of the *vāggeyakāra-s* follow this principle. It is only in that combination that the main *swara, shudha dhaivata* shines. Otherwise there is a tendency to tag on the *dhaivata* of a higher frequency, which may lead (or mislead) to *pūrvikalyāni*. The item is well suited to build up the desired tempo in a concert with added *nēraval* and *swarakalpana*.

Patiki hāрати : Surati

Note the commencing *swara-s* of the *kriti. sa ni dha pa ma ga pa ma ri*. The usage, *ma ga pa ma ri* is what distinguishes the *rāga* from *kēdāragaula*. *Surati* also provides a satisfying conclusion. As is rightly said “*ādi nātai, antya surati*”. Thyāgarāja could not have chosen a better *rāga* for a final event like *hāрати*. The *hāрати* is conducted to ward off the evil effects that may befall on the Lord and His consort. Thyāgarāja is a *rasika* too! Watch the description of the “beautiful damsels standing reverently on either side, with their nose studs gambolling before their faces like tiny moons”.



Appendix – One *Sruti and Swara*

"Music alone takes one prisoner, holds one fast, and dissolves one in ecstasy"

Sruti

Sruti is perhaps the most difficult part of the theory of music to study. Ancient musicologists, sages and grammarians have written volumes on the subject. Good part of it deals with the physics of sound and the explanation of these facts in detail may not be relevant to the reader. Nevertheless, what may be essential of this complex subject is explained in as simple a way as possible, the understanding of which will certainly help the reader to appreciate classical music better. It must be warned that not knowing these facts is certainly not a handicap to enjoy the melodious aspect of music.

The word *sruti* is derived from the *dhātu* in Sanskrit *srū*, pronounced as *srū*, as in "true". This *dhātu* means, "to hear". With the addition of *ti*, meaning to create an action, the action being "to hear" the word *sruti* is evolved. *Sruti* has been used in two forms, *vēda-s* in one form, and *laukika* in another form. In *vēda-s* again, it takes other forms such as *srunuta*, *sruniti*, etc. *Vēda-s* were passed on to posterity, by the media of oral recitation from sages in the origin, to the disciples through respective *gurus* (teachers). In classical literature, the word *sruti* is used, in the sense "heard", or that which is heard; that which is heard and carried on from *guru* to *sishya*. On the other hand, *smruti* is that which is carried on or transferred by collective memory of race as in *purana-s* and *itihāsa-s*. The bridge between the *vēda-s* on the one hand and the present classical music on the other, helped to get an understanding of classical music through *sāma vēda* and *vice versa*. This understanding or *siksha* as it is called is elaborated well in a *siksha* called *nārādī yā siksha*. This helps to know the relationship between *swara* and *sruti*. While *sruti* is the cause, *swara* is the effect.

Another concept of *sruti* is that "whatever is perceived" by the ear is *sruti*. In other words, *sruti* is interpreted as *sravanīndriya grahyathvat dvanivēva sruti bhavēth*. Capacity to merely hear is different from *sravanīndriya sāmārthya* i.e., capacity to distinguish a near placed tone.

The 22 sruti-s

Musicians and musicologists often refer to the term, “22 *sruti-s*”. These are nothing but 22 different frequencies that are commonly used in the grammar of music. To explain this feature, we must understand the difference between the two terms, *sruti* and *swara*. One of the grammarians, Kallinatha gives an interesting interpretation. Though there are several theories relating to the interpretation of *sruti* and *swara*, the one explained by Kallinatha, called the “interval oriented theory” is good enough for our understanding of this complex subject. According to him, when a string tied at two ends, is struck, one can observe two stages in the production of sound, the first one being the sound that is obtained at the first level, immediately following which is the production of overtone. He calls the first sound as *sruti* and the second overtone sound, as *swara*.

The quality of sound or tune is nothing but a succession of tones (*swara*), one tone after the other, distinctly separated by intervals of time. These intervals may be very short; but if they were not there at all, what we should hear would be noise and not music. We only perceive a series of tones as a consecutive melody if the pitches are closely related. No musical tone is complete unto it; and as each musical tone points beyond itself, reaches as it were a hand to the next, so we too, as the hands reach out, listen tensely and expectantly for each new tone. Only a relation between tones (*swara-s*) constitutes music, never a tone in isolation. The content of music therefore is “tonally moving form.”

Having referred to the seven notes (*sapta swara-s*) earlier, the subdivisions in them must be understood. In the succession of *swara-s* from *sa* on to *ri ga ma pa dha ni sa*, the first *sa* refers to the lower octave and is called the *ādhāra shadja*. The second *sa* in the series corresponds to the *ādhāra shadja* of the next octave. In terms of frequencies that they correspond to, if the tonic note has a frequency of 1, the top *sa*, has exactly double that, i.e., 2. The frequencies of the other *swara-s* between these two *shadja-s*, i.e., *ri ga ma pa dha* and *ni* are naturally the fractions between 1 and 2. Most of the ancient works, *Lakshana Granta-s* from Bharata’s time, 4th century BC to 18th century AD refer to the famous *Sanskrit ślōka*:

Rāga Sudha - Understanding Carnātic Music

Chatuschatuschatschaiva
Shadja panchama madhyama
Dwai dwai nishāda gāndhāra
Thrishsthrī rishabha dhaivata

The meaning of the above *ślōka* is, that the notes *shadja*, *panchama* and *madhyama*, each have four *sruti*-s (frequencies), *nishāda* and *gāndhāra* have each two, while *rishabha* and *dhaivata* have each three *sruti*-s. We thus arrive at 22 *sruti*-s.

There is the other way of interpreting and arriving at the same number of 22 *sruti*-s. Among the *sapta swara*-s, the notes *shadja* and *panchama* are considered to be stable (*avikrita swara*-s), meaning changeless or having single and constant frequency. The other five *swara*-s, *ri ga ma dha ni*, each have four possible variations, called *ēkasruti*, *dvisruti*, *trisruti*, and *chatusruti*, meaning 1,2,3 and 4 different frequencies. Thus, besides *shadja* and *panchama*, each of the rest of the five notes give rise to four varieties, resulting in a total of 20 varieties, and when we add the two stable *swara*-s, *sa* and *pa*, we arrive at 22 *sruti*-s. There is much more grammar in this interpretation than what is stated.

The origin of swara-s

To explain the other facet of this complex subject, it may be worthwhile to illustrate a simple experiment, which produces fascinating results. What one need do is to mount a metal string as in a *tambūra* and strike it. It naturally produces a sound of a definite frequency. When its length is reduced to half by placing a finger and struck again, the string produces more vibrations, in fact, double the number of vibrations, each merging with the other. In other words, there is a clear mathematical relationship between the length of the wire and frequency of vibration and this relationship has a different expression to the sound produced by the open string. This is called *dviguna* (doubling) or *dvigunatva*. In yet another similar experiment, when the same string is stopped at 1/3 length and the two segments are played, the shorter segment produces the note *tarapanchama* (the *panchama* of the higher octave) and the longer segment produces the *madhyamapanchama*. This again is an example of *dvigunatva*.

Independent of the research going on in the field of Indian music, similar observations were made in the system of Western music. When a bass voice sings *c*, below the middle *c*', and a soprano sings *c*" above middle '*c*', they are recognizably singing the same note although the pitches are widely separated. In fact, the frequencies of the three are mathematically related by simply doubling the frequency in each case, the ratio being 2:1. The acoustic fact is said to have been discovered by Pythagoras in the sixth century BC, who found that, if a stretched string stopped at its midpoint and half string then plucked, the note sounded would be an octave above that sounded by the unstopped string, vibrating as a whole. The Pythagorean principle, that the octave essentially comprised within itself all sounds used in music as far as their musical relations were concerned, became established. The octave is produced with so little difficulty that untrained voices sing it believing that they are singing in unison.

Notes produced by altering position of stop and when <i>shorter segment</i> is plucked			
String length altered		Vibration ratio	Note produced
By 1/2	Rest of the length is 1/2	2	Sa (<i>shadja</i>)
By 1/3	Rest of the length is 2/3	3/2	Pa (<i>panchama</i>)
By 1/4	Rest of the length is 3/4	4/3	Ma (<i>madhyama</i>)
By 1/5	Rest of the length is 4/5	5/4	Ga (<i>gāndhāra</i>)
By 1/9	Rest of the length is 8/9	9/8	Ri (<i>rishabha</i>)
By 2/5	Rest of the length is 3/5	5/3	Dha (<i>dhaivata</i>)
By 7/15	Rest of the length is 8/15	15/8	Ni (<i>nishāda</i>)

Going back to the general run of the article, the *sruti*, in terms of common usage, of every singer or the musical instrument varies. In a few cases however, it may be identical, as in the case of duet singers or duet players. And now, how does one know one's own *sruti* (*sruti* here means, the convenient range of the artiste's voice) and fix it up? In Carnātic music, there are three basic notes, which constitute the framework, as it were. They are, the *ādhāra shadja*, the tonic note, or the first note in the scale indicated by the notation *sa* with a dot beneath it, the second is *pa*, the fifth note in the scale and the *tāra shadja* of the higher octave indicated by the notation *sa* with a dot above it. Starting from the

ādhāra shadja, as one moves up in the scale towards *ni* (*nishāda*), the scale from the *ādhāra shadja* up to *nishāda* constitutes an octave (as explained above in the Western system). One can go further up from top *shadja* (*tāra shadja*) or can also move down from *ādhāra shadja*. The scale from *ādhāra shadja* up to *tāra shadja* constitutes one octave, the middle, the scale above the *tāra shadja* forms the upper octave and the scale below the *ādhāra shadja* forms the lower octave. Thus, the three octaves are established. When it comes to fixing one's own *sruti*, or the range of voice in the present context, one should reach comfortably the *panchama* of the lower octave as well as the *panchama* of the higher octave. This may be considered as the *sruti* of the singer in question. The usage of the term *sruti* here is in general terms and not in the terms of physics or grammar. In so far as the instruments like *vīna* or the violin is concerned, they can be tuned to any *sruti*; only they have to keep changing the thickness of the strings as they go to higher *sruti*-s. Instruments like *ghata* or *kanjira* have fixed *sruti*-s. Lady singers, because of their high pitch, have higher *sruti*-s and the accompanying artiste like the violinist, find it hard to play because the strings are thinner and are in high tension.

Swara – Definition

Having gone through the subject of *sruti*, we now move on to the subject of *swara*, which has direct relation to *sruti*. Children singing, *sa ri ga ma pa dha ni sa* is a household ritual. In fact these musical notes had to be taught by a teacher as a beginning to introducing classical music to a child. These notes starting from *sa* and ending up with *ni* are called the *sapta swara*-s or the seven notes of music. To state in simple terms, 'that which is able to please of its own accord, is a *swara*. The basis or the foundation for all systems of music is the seven notes or *swara*-s, just like the seven days of the week or the seven colours of the rainbow.

Twelve workable swara-s

Among these seven notes or *sapta swara*-s, the two *swara*-s, *shadja sa* and *panchama pa*, as already remarked, are fixed, which means that they do not admit any variations. Four amongst the remaining, *ri ga dha ni*

admit three variations of each in the order of increasing frequencies, one closer to the next higher *swara* and the other closer to the next lower *swara*, leaving the third, in-between, *ma* which has only two variations. These varieties are named and listed below.

Rishabha: *shudha rishabha, chatusruti rishabha, shatsruti rishabha*

Gāndhāra: *shudha gāndhāra, sadhārana gāndhāra, antara gāndhāra*

Madhyama: *shudha madhyama, prati madhyama*

Dhaivata: *shudha dhaivata, shatsruti dhaivata, chatusruti dhaivata*

Nishāda: *shudha nishāda, kaishiki nishāda, kākali nishāda*

One point, which should be specially noted, is, that the frequencies of the following pairs of *swara*-s are exactly the same.

chatusruti rishabha and shudha gāndhāra

shatsruti rishabha and sadhārana gāndhāra

chatusruti dhaivata and shudha nishāda

shatsruti dhaivata and kaishiki nishāda

Nomenclature

Thus, in essence, Indian music is based only on 12 *swara*-s. The technical names of the basic 7 *swara*-s together with their corresponding equivalents in Indian (Hindustani and Carnātic) and Western music are given in the table below.

Musical notes

	Swara name	Indian solfa	Western solfa
1	<i>Shadja</i>	Sa	Do
2	<i>Rishabha</i>	Ri	Ray
3	<i>Gāndhāra</i>	Ga	Me
4	<i>Madhyama</i>	Ma	Fe
5	<i>Panchama</i>	Pa	So
6	<i>Dhaivata</i>	Dha	La
7	<i>Nishāda</i>	Ni	Si or Te

The ambiguity of frequencies of pairs of *swara*-s referred to above is nothing strange; it is seen in the system of western music also, i.e., calling the same note by two names. For instance, notes C-sharp and D-flat are represented in the same key on the piano. Likewise, are F-sharp and G-flat and G-sharp and A-flat. To clear up the possible confusion in

the present jargon, it can be explained in simple terms that *shadja* refers to the lowest pitch in the sequence; *sadhārana gāndhāra* has the lowest pitch in the three *gāndhāra*-s; similarly the rest of the *swara*-s. To sum up, amongst the *sapta swara*-s, *sa* and *pa* do not admit variations and therefore, are called *achala* or *avikrita* (changeless) *swara*-s, *shudha swara*-s are referred to as *prakriti swara*-s and have the prefix *shudha*. As opposed to this, *vikrita swara*-s, which admit varieties, have the prefixes like *chatusruti*, *shatsruti*, *sadhārana*, *antara* etc. A *rāga* may have only *shudha swara*-s as in *kanakāngi*.

The melody

The powers of enjoyment and of memory are different. To enjoy is to squeeze every last drop of the sweetness out of a fruit, and to remember is the art of not only holding fast to what once has been enjoyed, but of moulding it to even purer forms. This observation sounds apt when one wishes to enjoy the innate beauty of a *rāga*. The soul of music is *rāga*. The idea of absolute music is reached in the concept of a *rāga*. Musical compositions are concrete forms of the abstract *rāga*. The entire structure of Indian music is built around the concept of *rāga*. Indian music, as already stated, is *rāga* or modal music. The individuality of mode is established by *swara*-s (notes) of different frequencies and structure.

As discussed earlier, there are only 12 basic *swara*-s, which form the foundation of the entire gamut of *rāga*-s; the 12 *swara*-s giving rise to as many as 34,776 *rāga*-s! It is an astonishing miracle. Let us analyse it. It is not just the interrelationship between these *swara*-s that establish the *rāga*, although it is an integral part. More important is the relationship of these *swara*-s to the basic note, the *ādhāra shadja*. Any sound produced has a definite frequency and corresponds to a musical note, but to define it as a musical note, it must have a reference point to trace the relationship from. To give an analogy, when it is said that it is a two-hour flight to a particular destination, we should know from where the flight start. In other words, the frequency of any sound produced has relevance only when it is read in conjunction with the tonic note; otherwise, it makes no sense; it remains an irrelevant frequency. A noteworthy feature is, even though a *rāga* is built on the basis of a sequence of *swara*-s, the drone of the *tambūra* will be spelling out the *ādhāra shadja* all the time,

loud and clear, so much so, the said reliance is constantly maintained. It is therefore established that no *rāga* can be without *ādhāra shadja*. For instance, if the drone is stopped, whatever be the combination with *swara-s*, it will fall flat without the help of the *ādhāra shadja*, unless it is pronounced vocally or on the instrument. We therefore indirectly see the importance of *sruti* while singing a *rāga* or music in general. Even otherwise, the tonic note is presumed. This is how memory indirectly plays another important role in music.

Definition: To state the facts again, the personality or the *swarūpa* of the *rāga* is built up through the combination of notes (*swara-s*) and seminotes (*anuswaras*) of definite frequencies and phrases in conformity with the recognized aesthetic laws. This may be considered as a general definition of a *rāga*. In simple terms, “that which pleases is a *rāga*”. A combination of *swara-s*, capable of pleasing, is a *rāga*. To put more explicitly, a *rāga* is not a haphazard collection of *swara-s* or even succession of *swara-s*, but is a hierarchical structure governed by the dominance of certain *swara-s* and the presence of other *swara-s* in consonance with these, by the *bahutva* (dominance) and *alpatva* (limited usage) of *swara-s*. The concept of a *rāga* results by considering the melodic element exclusively in Indian music and our ancestors have clearly elucidated this concept by means of the *lakshana-s* of a *rāga*. The pervasive charm of a *rāga* is always intellectual, at least in part. It is not mere sound that captivates, but the “passage” of sound from one *swara* to another and at a particular pace. The intervals may be short, but if they were not there at all, what we should hear would be a glissando like noise, not music. When we listen to music what we perceive as a tune is succession of separate tones; the artiste converts it into a continuous melody. Science can analyse the differences between individual tones in a variety of ways, in terms of loudness, timbre, pitch, wave form and so on. But it cannot tell us about the relation between the tones, which constitute music. “A melody is a series of tones that makes sense.” If we want to hear a series of tones as completely separate, we either have to make the time intervals between tones longer than those usually employed in musical compositions, or the frequencies of the tones very different from one another. We only perceive a series of tones as a

consecutive melody if the pitches are closely related. True, a combination of *swara-s*, as stated above produces a *rāga*. In order to have a melodic entity however, a *rāga* must take at least five *swara-s* of a scale just as a minimum of three lines is necessary to form a triangle. *madhyama* and *panchama* being *samvādi swara-s* (consonantal or unison of sounds) of *shadja*, it is necessary that at least one of the two should be present in a *rāga*.



Appendix – Two

"The mnemonic power of music is evident in modern culture"

Classification of Janya rāga-s

The *janya rāga-s* can be sub-divided into two classes called *upānga* and *bhāshānga rāga-s*. *Upānga rāga-s* are those *janya rāga-s*, which take *swara-s* in their framework only from the *janaka rāga-s*. For instance, the parent or *janaka rāga* of *mōhana* is *harikāmbhōji*. Without going to the exact frequencies of the *swara-s* involved, it is suffice to say that *rāga, mōhana* is derived by the deletion of the *swara-s ma* and *ni* present in the parent *rāga* both in the *ārohana* and *avarohana*. Thus *mōhana* becomes *upānga-audava-audava rāga*. Let us consider another example. *Rāga, malahari* is derived from the parent *rāga, māyāmālavagaula*, wherein both *ga* and *ni* are deleted in the *ārohana*, but in the *avarohana* only the *swara ni* is deleted retaining the other *swara-s*; the derivative is *upānga-audava-shādava rāga*. Take yet another example; *ārabhi* is a derivative of the parent *rāga, dhīraśankarābharana* (same as *śankarābharana*). In the *ārohana*, *ga* and *ni* are deleted, while in the *avarohana*, all the seven *swara-s* are retained. *Ārabhi* becomes *upānga-audava-sampūrna rāga*. There are several such examples. Though out of context, it is relevant to comment that the overall melody produced by an *audava rāga* is often greater than its corresponding *janaka rāga*. But this is not a rule.

Bhāshānga rāga-s on the other hand, take a foreign note in addition to what is already present in the parent *rāga*. In other words, such *rāga-s* have two varieties of *swara-s*, those present in the parent *rāga* called *swakiya swara* and the foreign note or visiting note called *anya swara*, which is not present in the parent *rāga*. This foreign note however, is used in special or particular *sanchāra-s* or *prayōga-s* (movement). Examples will clarify the message. In *bilahari* and *bhairavi rāga-s*, the *kākali nishāda* and *chatusruti dhaivata* (Ref: Section on 'Swara-s') are the respective *anya swara-s*. The corresponding *swakiya swara-s* for the two *rāga-s* are *kākali nishāda* and *shudha dhaivata* respectively. In Carnātic music, there are only 26 *bhāshānga rāga-s*.

More sub-divisions

There is one more group in *janya rāga-s* called *vakra rāga-s*. The *rāga-s* in this group have their *swara-s* occurring in a crooked way in the *ārohana*, *avarohana* or in both. In other words, graphically represented, in a *non-vakra rāga*, the *swara-s* in *ārohana* and *avarohana* will be regularly ascending and descending, whereas in a *vakra rāga*, they are not. For instance, in the *rāga*, *ānandabhairavi*, the *ārohana* is, *s g r g m p d p s*, which is *vakra* but in the *avarohana*, it is straight, namely, *s n d p m g r s*. In the *rāga*, *śrī*, the *ārohana* is, *s r m p n s* and the *avarohana* is, *s n p d n p m r g r s*, which is again *vakra*. In *sahāna rāga* for instance, both the *ārohana* and *avarohana* are *vakra*. The *ārohana* is *s r g m p n d n s* and *avarohana* is *s n d p m g m r g s*.

Thus more subdivisions in *vakra rāga-s* are possible which are not difficult to identify and these are: 1. *sampūrṇa vakra*, 2. *vakra audava*, 3. *vakra shādava*, 4. *ubhaya vakra rāga*, 5. *upāṅga vakra* and *bhāshāṅga vakra rāga-s*, 5. *ēkaswara*, *dviswara*, *triswara* and *chatuswara vakra rāga-s*.

One more feature of *janya rāga-s*, which is easily understood, is also to be stated in this context. There are some *rāga-s*, which do not touch the *shadjā* of *tāra stāyi* (higher octave). They end up with a lower *swara*, like *nī*, *dha*, *pa* or even *ma*. There are four such groups, one ending with *nishāda*, called *nishādāntya* (*antya* means, ending), the second, ending with *dhaivata*, called *dhaivatāntya*, third, ending with *panchama*, called *panchamāntya* and fourth, ending with *madhyama*, called *madhyamāntya*. In addition to the *janaka-janya rāga-s*, there are a few more *rāga-s*, which can be classified as:

1. *Ghana rāga-s*: Like the famous *ghana rāga panchaka*, i.e., *nāta*, *gaula*, *ārabhi*, *varāli* and *śrī*, in which the five famous *pancharatna-s* are composed.
2. *Navya* or *rakti rāga-s*: which have enormous scope in playing *ālāpana* or *thānam*, like *tōdi*, *bhairavi*, *kāmbhōji*, *śankarābharana*, *kalyāni* etc.
3. *Karnātaka rāga-s*: which are indigenous to South India, like *bhairavi*, *ānandabhairavi*, *kēdāragaula*, *nīlāmbari*, *śankarābharana* etc.

Katipayādi Sūtra: Its utility and adaptability

The next corollary of the *mēlakarta* scheme is its adaptability to what is called *katipayādi sūtra*, an ingenious formula by the help of which, given the number of *mēla rāga*, one can identify the *lakshana* or the character of the respective *rāga* or vice versa. The formula is based on certain vernacular alphabets of Indian language, *Sanskrit*. This formula covers the entire gamut of the *mēlakarta rāga*-s. They are:

Kādinava (*nava* means nine) consist of nine alphabets in succession, namely, *ka, kha, ga, gha, ng, cha, chha, ja, jha, jna*

Tādinava consists of *ta, tha, da, dha, na, tha, thha, da, dha, na*

Pādipancha (*pancha* means five) consists of *pa, pha, ba, bha, ma*

Yādyashta (*ashta* means eight) consists of *ya, ra, la, va, sa, sha, sa, ha*

The above formula is depicted in tabular form below:

The table of katipayādi formula

Sankhya	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
<i>Kādinava</i> (9) letters from ka	jna	ka	kha	ga	gha	ng	cha	chha	ja	jha
<i>Tādinava</i> (9) letters from ta	<u>na</u>	ta	tha	da	dha	<u>na</u>	<u>tha</u>	thha	<u>da</u>	<u>dha</u>
<i>Pādipancha</i> (5) letters from pa		pa	pha	ba	bha	ma				
<i>Yādyashta</i> (8) letters from ya		ya	ra	<u>la</u>	va	<u>sa</u>	sha	sa	ha	

In examining the utility of the scheme, it is the first two syllables of each *mēla rāga*, which plays a crucial role and thus leads to the sequence of the structure. One has to first choose the first two syllables of the *mēla rāga*, for example, say *harikāmbhōji*, where the syllables are *ha* and *ri*. To go back to the scheme, the syllable *ha* comes under the series *yādyashta* and its number in the succession is 8; similarly, the second syllable *ri* comes under the same series *Yādyashta* and its number is 2. Putting two together, the number reads 82. In computing, this number is reversed as a rule, when it becomes 28. Thus the number of the *mēla rāga harikāmbhōji* is 28. The next procedure is to fix up the place of the *sapta swara*-s in the *rāga*. Since the number is 28, the *rāga* falls in the fifth *chakra* (Ref: *Mēlakarta Chart*), besides the constant notes *sa* and *pa*, since the number is in the *pūrvanga*, the *madhyama* happens to be

shudha madhyama. As for as *rishabha-gāndhāra* relationship is concerned, it is known from the scheme that the fifth *chakra* takes *chatusruti rishabha* and *antara gāndhāra*. This completes the *pūrvānga swara-s*, preceding the *panchama*. In establishing the *uttarānga swara-s*, *dhaivata* and *nishāda*, since the *rāga* occupies the fourth rank in the fifth *chakra*, as a rule, it takes *chatusruti dhaivata* and *kaishiki nishāda*. Substituting the symbols of the notes, that constitute the *swara-s* of the *rāga*, it can be read that *harikāmbhōji* has the *swara-s*, *sa, ri, gu, ma, pa, dhi, ni, sā*. The other nomenclature that is in vogue is the mnemonic representation of the six *mēla-s* in each *chakra* with syllables – *pā, sri, go, bhu, mā* and *shā*. The nomenclature of *harikāmbhōji* would be *bāna-bhu*, meaning fifth *chakra* and fourth *mēla* mnemonic.

On expansion, the *rāga harikāmbhōji* consists, besides *shadja* and *panchama*, *shudha madhyama*, *chatusruti rishabha*, *antara gāndhāra*, *chatusruti dhaivata* and *kaishiki nishāda*. The corresponding *prati madhyama rāga* of *harikāmbhōji* may be arrived at by adding 36 to 28, which would be 64 and the *rāga* is *vāchaspati*. The only difference between *harikāmbhōji* and *vāchaspati* is, that the former takes *shudha madhyama* and the latter, *prati madhyama*. The computation of the character of other *mēlakarta rāga-s* can be worked out on similar lines.

Following *mēlakarta rāga-s* are exceptions to the *katapayādi* rule

Mēlakarta Rāga	**	Mēla	Mēlakarta Rāga	**	Mēla
Cha kra vākam	6 1	16	Si m hēndra madhyam	7 5	57
Di vya mani	8 4	48	Chi trā mbari	6 6	66
Vi shvām bari	4 5	54	Jyō ti swarūpini	8 6	68
Shyā ma lāngi	5 5	55			

** Denotes numbers derived from *katapayadi* chart

It should be commented at this stage that a few *rāga-s* do not have the first syllables to fall into the scheme like, *tōdi*, *kalyāni*, *śankarābharana* etc. To accommodate these *rāga-s* in the scheme, suitable prefixes are added like, *mēcha* for *kalyāni*, *dhīra* for *śankarābharana* and *hanuma* for *tōdi*, *khara* for *harapriya* etc. The *katapayadi sutra* can also be applied to the nomenclature of the *suladi tāla-s*, but the formula does not apply to the names of the *suladi tāla-s*.

Mēlakarta Chart – Katapayadi Scheme

Chakra	Mēlakarta	Shudha Madhyam Sampūrna Mēlakarta	Rishabha	Gāndhāra	Daivata	Nishāda	Prati Madhyam Sampūrna Mēlakarta	Mēlakarta	Chakra
I INDU	1	Kanakāngi	S	S	S	S	Sālagam	37	VII RISHI
	2	Ratnāngi	"	"	"	K	Jalārnavam	38	
	3	Gānamūrti	"	"	"	Ka	Jhālavarāli	39	
	4	Vanaspati	"	"	C	K	Navanītam	40	
	5	Mānavati	"	"	"	Ka	Pāvani	41	
	6	Tānarūpi	"	"	Sh	Ka	Raghupriya	42	
II NĒTRA	7	Sēnāvati	S	Sa	S	S	Gavāmbōdhi	43	VIII VASU
	8	Hanumatōdi	"	"	"	K	Bhavapriya	44	
	9	Dhēnuka	"	"	"	Ka	Śubhapantuvarāli	45	
	10	Nātakapriya	"	"	C	K	Shadvidhamārgini	46	
	11	Kōkilapriya	"	"	"	Ka	Suvarnāngi	47	
	12	Rūpavati	"	"	Sh	Ka	Divyamani	48	
III AGNI	13	Gāyakapriya	S	A	S	S	Dhavalāmbari	49	IX BRAHMA
	14	Vakulābharana	"	"	"	K	Nāmanārāyani	50	
	15	Māyāmālavagaula	"	"	"	Ka	Kāmavardhani	51	
	16	Chakravākam	"	"	C	K	Rāmapriya	52	
	17	Sūryakāntam	"	"	"	Ka	Gamanaśrama	53	
	18	Hātakāmbari	"	"	Sh	Ka	Vishvambari	54	
IV VĒDA	19	Jhankāradvani	C	Sa	S	S	Shyāmalāngi	55	X DISI
	20	Natabhairavi	"	"	"	K	Shanmukhapriya	56	
	21	Kīravāni	"	"	"	Ka	Simhēndramadhyam	57	
	22	Kharaharapriya	"	"	C	K	Hēmavati	58	
	23	Gaurīmanōhari	"	"	"	Ka	Dharmavati	59	
	24	Varunapriya	"	"	Sh	Ka	Nītimati	60	
V BĀNA	25	Māraranjani	C	A	S	S	Kāntamani	61	XI RUDRA
	26	Chārukēsi	"	"	"	K	Rishabhapriya	62	
	27	Sarasāngi	"	"	"	Ka	Latāngi	63	
	28	Harikāmbhōji	"	"	C	K	Vāchaspati	64	
	29	Dhiraśankarābharana	"	"	"	Ka	Mēchakalyāni	65	
	30	Nāgānandini	"	"	Sh	Ka	Chitrāmbari	66	
VI RUTU	31	Yāgapriya	Sh	A	S	S	Sucharitra	67	XII ĀDITYA
	32	Rāgavardhani	"	"	"	K	Jyotiswarūpini	68	
	33	Gāngēyabhūshani	"	"	"	Ka	Dhātuvardhani	69	
	34	Vāgadhīshvari	"	"	C	K	Nāsikābhushani	70	
	35	Śūlini	"	"	"	Ka	Kosalam	71	
	36	Chalanāta	"	"	Sh	Ka	Rasikapriya	72	
A:Antara C:Chatusruti K:Kaishiki Ka:Kākali S:Shudha Sa:Sadhārana Sh:Shatsruti									

Glossary

- Ādhāra shadja:** Tonic note, key note or the basic pitch chosen by a musician.
- Ādi:** Name given to *chatusra jāti triputa tāla* consisting of eight *aksharakāla*-s. Can be divided into sections, *pūrvānga* (the first half) and *uttarānga* (second half).
- Āditya:** Name of the 12th *chakra* in *mēlakarta* scheme, comprising the *mēla rāga*-s, 67-72.
- Agni:** Name given to third *chakra* in *mēlakarta* scheme, comprising the *mēla rāga*-s, 13-18.
- Ālāpana:** Spontaneous elaboration of a *rāga* confined to certain established rules and principles within the framework of the *swara*-s of the *rāga*.
- Alpatva:** The feature of being rare.
- Amsa:** The prominent *swara* in a *rāga*, a strong resting note based on which the *rāga* can be weaved round; also called the *jīva swara* or *chāya swara* of a *rāga*.
- Anāgata graha:** Where the song or composition commences after the commencement of the *tāla*.
- Ananyaswara bhāshānga rāga:** A *bhāshānga rāga* taking one foreign note, like *bhairavi*, *bilahari* or *kāmbhōji*.
- Āndhola:** A type of creativity where the frequency swings between two *swara*-s; also a form of *gamaka*.
- Ankita:** Mudra or signature of a composer.
- Antinode:** Midpoint of the vibrating length of a string at which the amplitude of the vibration is maximum.
- Anupallavi:** Second section of the *kriti* or melody commencing after the *pallavi*.
- Anuvādi:** See under *vādi*. *anuvādi* is either *vādi*, *samvādi* nor *vivādi*. *Anuvādi* is somewhat less consonant.
- Anyā swara:** Visiting or accidental note, the foreign note in a *bhāshānga rāga*, opposite of *swakiya swara*. *Anyā swara* gives a flashing touch to the melodic beauty of a *bhāshānga rāga* and also contributes to their individuality.
- Ārohana:** A phrase in the ascending order of the pitch.
- Ārohi:** A phrase in the ascending order of the pitch.
- Aṭṭa graha:** The point where the music begins, and before the commencement of the *tāla āvarta*.
- Audava rāga:** A *rāga* wherein only five of the *sapta swara*-s are represented in both the *ārohana* and *avarohana*; e.g. *madhyamāvati*.
- Audava-sampūrṇa rāga:** A *rāga* in which only five of the *sapta swara*-s figure in the *ārohana* and all the *sapta swara*-s find place in the *avarohana*, e.g. *dhanyāsi*, *ārabhi*, *bilahari*, *kēdāragaula*.
- Audava-shāḍava rāga:** A *rāga* in which five of the *sapta swara*-s figure in the *ārohana*, and six of them in the *avarohana*. e.g. *jaganmōhini*, *sāma* (*shyāma*), *malahari*.
- Avikṛita swara:** A changeless *swara* like *shadja* and *panchama*.

Bāni: The tradition; an established style; *padantara*.

Bahutva: A note, which is frequently used in a *rāga*; opposite of *alpatva*.

Bāna: Name of the fifth *chakra* in *mēlakarta* scheme, consisting of the *mēla rāga-s*, 25-30.

Bhāva: The soul of the expression in music.

Bhaga: Name given to the *sankīrna jāti triputa tāla* consisting of 13 *akshara-s*

Bhāshānga rāga: A *janya rāga*, which takes in one or two foreign notes, absent in its *mēlakarta rāga* for enhancing the melodic beauty of the *rāga*. When the two variations of *ri ga ma dha ni* are utilized, then the *bhāshānga rāga* can be named as *rishabhadwaja*, *gāndhāradwaja*, etc.

Bhuvana: Name given to *sankīrna jāti druva tāla* consisting of 29 *aksharas*.

Brahma: Name of the ninth *chakra* comprising *mēla rāga-s*, 49-54.

Chakra: Name given to *tisra jāti rūpaka tāla* consisting of five *aksharakāla-s*. The systematic classification of *mēlakarta rāga-s* into 12 groups, each consisting of six *rāga-s*. Each group is called a *chakra*. The first six *chakra-s* correspond to the second six *chakra-s*, except for the change in the note, *madhyama*.

Charana: The third section of the melody in a composition.

Chatusra: Four.

Chittaswara: A solfa passage in the *kriti*, as an Appendix, enriches melodic beauty in a composition.

Dhaivatantya rāga: A *rāga* ending in *dhaivata*, in the ascending scale.

Dhātu swara: A note removed from another by skipping over the intervening note or notes in the scale, e.g. *pa-ga*, *ma-ri*, *ga-sa*, as in the *rāga*, *śankarābharana*.

Disi: Name of the tenth *chakra* in the *mēlakarta* scheme comprising *rāga-s* 55-70.

Drutakāla: Fast tempo.

Drone: A musical instrument that is used for sounding the *ādhāra shadja*, the lower *panchama* and the lower *shadja* in addition to the midtones which produce the rich harmonics.

Dvigunatva: Where the frequencies of a note and its octave note bear a (doubling), 1:2 relationship

Dvitiya ghana rāga panchaka: The second set of five *ghana rāga-s* – *kēdāram*, *nārāyanagaula*, *rītigaula*, *sāranganāta*, and *bauli*.

Eduppu : The starting point of the *kriti* in the *tāla āvarta*; also called *graha*.

Ettugada swara-s: The solfa passages figuring in the later part of the *varnam*.

Gamaka: That which produces *sukha* (pleasure) by applying quiver to the *swara* (note).

Gati: The underlying rhythm of *tāla*.

Gīta(m): The simplest of musical forms; it has no *anga-s* like *pallavi*, *anupallavi* or *charana*.

Graha: The starting point of the music in the *tāla āvarta*.

Gupta: Name given to the *misra jāti ata tāla*, consisting of 10 aksharakāla-s.

Harmonics: When a stretched string fastened at both ends is made to vibrate, it first vibrates in the entire length, then in two segments, then in three segments, then in four and so on. As a result we hear certain sounds in rapid succession superimposed upon the principle sound. The lowest note, i.e., the note produced by the vibration of the whole length of the string is the loudest and is called the fundamental or prime note and the others are called overtones, upper partial tones or harmonics. Harmonics can be heard clearly when the vibrating length is sufficiently long.

Heptatonic scale: A *sampūrṇa rāga* having all the seven swara-s.

Hexatonic scale: A scale taking six notes, *śadja* and five others.

Indu: Name of the first *chakra* in the *mēlakarta* scheme comprising *rāga*-s 1-6.

Jāti: The name given to *tāla* solfa syllables, like *taka tari kita naka tatin gina thom*.

Jatiswara(m): A composition very much like the *swarajati* in respect of musical structure and arrangement. It has the divisions - *pallavi*, *anupallavi* and *charana*, the *charana*-s are set to different *dhātu*-s.

Jīva swara: A note which reveals the individuality of the *rāga*, *jīva swara* may be *amsa swara*.

Kalpita sangita: Music already composed.

Kampita swara: Swara subject to *kampita* or shake.

Kara: The name given to *sankīrṇa jāti jampa tāla*: 9 aksharakāla-s.

Karta rāga. *Janaka rāga*.

Katapayadi sankhya: The formula, which helps one to find the serial number of a *mēla rāga* when *rāga* name is given.

Konugōl: The art of reciting the *jati* in conformity to a *tāla* in a musical manner.

Kula: The name given to *misra jāti rūpaka tāla*: 9 aksharakāla-s.

Lakshana: The characteristic features used with reference to *rāga*, *tāla* or musical composition.

Lakshana gita: A musical composition of the *gita* type, where the *sāhitya* instead of being in praise of God, enumerates the *lakshana* of its *rāga*.

Laya: Rhythmic feature in music.

Lēkha: The name given to *chatusra jāti ata tāla*: 12 aksharakāla-s.

Lōya: The name given to *misra jāti ata tāla*: 18 aksharakāla-s.

Madhya sruti: A system of tuning in stringed instruments. In the *pañchama sruti*, the playing strings of a violin are tuned as *s p s p* and in the *madhyama sruti*, it is tuned as *p s p s*; in other words, the *śuddha gāndhāra* is taken as the tonic note. In effect, the pitch of the tonic note becomes raised by $2\frac{1}{2}$ tones or the interval of fourth (4/3).

Major tone: A *chatursruti* interval.

Manipravāla: A composition, which has a sequence of any two of these

languages – Sanskrit, Malayālam, Tamil and Telugu.

Mēlam: Group of musical instruments played together. *Periya mēlam* is *nāgaswaram* group. *Chinna mēlam* is the *bharatanātya* group, inclusive of the dancer or dancers and the instrumental accompanists. *Sangīta mēlam* is classical music orchestra; referred to in Telugu as *Pallakki sēva prabhandam*. *Nalayāndi mēlam* is folk band. *Urumi mēlam* is rustic band.

Māna: Name given to *chatusra jāti ēka tāla*: 4 *aksharakāla*-s.

Navavārana kriti-s: A group of nine *kriti-s* in praise of *Devi* by Muthuswāmi Dīkshitar.

Nētra: Name of the 2nd *chakra* in *mēlakarta* scheme, comprising *mēla rāga-s* 7-12.

Nēraval: Melodic variations of one line of *sāhitya* in a composition.

Nishadantya rāga: A *rāga* ending in *nishāda*, in the ascending scale.

Node: The two ends of the vibrating length of a string.

Nyāsa swara: A note in a *rāga* on which phrases can legitimately end; resting notes.

Padantara: Repertoire.

Pallavi: The first section of a melody in Carnātic music; the other sections are *anupallavi* and *charana*.

Panchamādyanta rāga: A *rāga* ending in *panchama*, in the ascending scale.

Pancharatna: Five gems; the five compositions in *ghana rāga-s*, *nāta*, *gaula*, *ārabhi*, *varāli* and *śrī*.

Pann: The equivalent of a *rāga* in ancient Tamil music.

Pidippu: The most effective expression in the form of a phrase or a combination of *swara-s* in a *rāga*; some striking *sanchāra-s* which bring out the identity of the *rāga*, called *pakad* in Hindustani music.

Pramāna: Ratio; the name given to *khanda jāti druva tāla*: 17 *aksharakāla-s*.

Rāga: Name given to *miśra jāti ēka tāla*; melody type.

Rāgamālīka: A composition in which sections are in different *rāga-s*. They may be of different kinds like, *daru*, *kīrtana* and *varnam*.

Rāga tālamālīka: A composition where, in addition to different *rāga-s*, different *tāla-s* are also woven in different sections.

Rakti: An aesthetic, pleasing and melodic expression.

Raja: The name given to *khanda jāti triputa tāla*: 7 *aksharakāla-s*.

Rata: The name given to *khanda jāti ēka tāla*: 5 *aksharakāla-s*.

Rava: The name given to *sankīrna jāti matya tāla*: 20 *aksharakāla-s*.

Rishi: Name of seventh *chakra* in the *mēlakarta* scheme: *rāga-s* 37-42

Rudra: Name of eleventh *chakra* in the *mēlakarta* scheme: *rāga-s* 61-66.

Rutu: Name of the 6th *chakra* in the *mēlakarta* scheme: *rāga-s* 31-36.

Samashticharanam: Where in the composition of both *anupallavi* and *charana* are the same.

Sama: The name given to *chatusra jāti matya tāla*: 10 *aksharakāla-s*.

Samvādi: See under *vādi*.

Sangati: Vibrations developed or built progressively in a composition.

Sara: The name given to *tisra jāti matya tāla*: 8 *aksharakāla*-s.

Sarwalaghu: Measuring time in even numbers – rhythm reckoned in a single beat right through.

Solkattu swara-s: A passage of solfa syllables interspersed with *jāti* figuring in some *kriti*-s.

Sruti: A deep humming sound produced by notes, *shadja*, *panchama*, and *tāra shadja*.

Stāyi: Octave.

Sudha: The name given to *tisra jāti jampa tāla*: 10 *aksharakāla*-s.

Shudha rāga: A pure *rāga*, which has no traces of other *rāga*-s.

Swākiya swara: In a *bhāshānga rāga*, the note belonging to the parent *rāga* is called *swākiya swara* and the foreign note is called *anya swara*.

Swarākshara: In a *swarākshara* passage, the solfa letters figuring in the whole or part of the *sāhitya* of the passage, corresponding to the music signified by these letters. The *swara*-s and the corresponding *sāhitya* letters are identical. The *ettugada pallavi*-s of many *varna*-s commences with *swarākshara*.

Swarāntara rāga: A *rāga* with only four notes in both *ārohana* and *avarohana*.

Tāra stāyi: Upper octave.

Thānam: A branch of *manodharma sangīta*.

Taniyāvartanam: Percussion solo.

Tiruvotriyūr pancharatna: The five *kriti*-s composed by Thyāgarāja in praise of Thripurasundari, the deity of Tiruvotriyūr.

Trayodasha lakshana-s: The thirteen characters of *rāga*, which establish the *swarūpa* or melodic entity of a *rāga*.

Trikāla: Three degrees of speed.

Upānga rāga: A *janya rāga* in which *anya swara*-s is not permissible.

Usi: *Visarjitam*.

Vādi, samvādi, vivādi and anuvādi: *Swara*-s are divided into four classes. *Vādi* is the principal or the predominant note of a *rāga*; this is sounded several times in a *rāga*. *Samvādi swara*-s are those between which there are eight or twelve *swara*-s; if two notes are related as *shadja* and *panchama*, or *shadja* and *shudha madhyama*, they are called *samvādi swara*-s. *Samvāditva* means the consonance of the fifth or the fourth. If between two *swara*-s there is only one *sruti*, these two notes are said to be *vivādi* to one another.

Vāggeyakāra: Author of both music and *sāhitya* of a musical composition.

Varja swara: The note eschewed in the *rāga*. e.g. *Panchama* in the *rāga*, *hindōla*.

Vasu: Name of the 8th *chakra* in the *mēlakarta* scheme comprising *rāga*-s 43-48.

Vēda: Name of the 4th *chakra* in the *mēlakarta* scheme: *rāga*-s 19-24.

Vidala : The name given to *khandā jāti ata tāla*: 14 *aksharakāla*-s.

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